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LOWDOWN

BRIAN FOX

The Letter "O"

SHEESH. I TAKE THIS EDITORIAL GIG JUST LIKE ANY PLAYING GIG THAT COMES MY WAY— very seriously. BASS PLAYER was there for me when I was a beginning bass player some 20+ years ago, and I owe it to the community at large to do my best to ensure the magazine is of the high quality that we all deserve. So it's a major bummer when a single letter—an "o," as it turns out—threatens to undermine everything I do here.

Let me rewind, since the error, a typo on last month's cover featuring the mighty Bryan Beller, certainly slipped by some of you: we misspelled the name of Bryan's band the Aristocrats by using the rather inventive, vowel-saving, "alternative" spelling, Aristcrats. I must have proofed that blasted cover ten times or more, through various iterations of all the other cover lines that appear on the page. But this one got by me.

With all that's going on in the world these days, a simple typo really isn't as catastrophic as perhaps I'm making it out to be. But it is a big deal. After all, it threatens to convey the message that we don't really care about details around here. Nothing could be further from the truth, but the damage is done. All I can say is that I feel sufficiently horrified by the error, and I take full responsibility for it. My apologies to Bryan, to his bandmates in the Aristocrats, and to all of you. I'd make the promise that there will never again be an error in the pages of BASS PLAYER, but that would be folly. I am, after all, human, and all I can do is to move on and try harder.

As if the typo weren't bad enough, we also failed to give credit to Jessi Ramone, a photographer friend of Bryan's who was kind enough to provide a number of photos we used in the story (on pages 28, 29, 38, and 42.) Further apologies to Jesse, whose work you see below.

Here's hoping I never have to write such a bummer of an editor's letter again—there's just too much *good* stuff I'd rather be writing about. Still, I want to make it clear that I understand y'all deserve better, and I'm pledging to double my efforts to bring you the best bass magazine every month. Thanks.

What you should have seen.

Photo by Jessi Ramone.

DIG MY RIG

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, A BEAUTIFUL FENDER Jazz Bass, my favorite for country bits. The white bass is an old Kalamazoo, my first bass. In the center: There's nothing like a Rickenbacker, my weapon of choice. Next, a Warwick—great tones, but heavy. The exotic woods make it cool. My Fender Jaguar has an old-school look and is a pleasure to play. My sound varies from show to show. On the left is my Trace Elliot AH500. This bad boy rocks! Below are two 4x10 cabinets, and to the right is a Trace Elliot GP7-300 1x15. On top of the GP7 is a Shure LX wireless—there's nothing like being mobile on stage. My processor is an ART SGX Nightbass with an X-15 Ultra Foot floorboard. On the very bottom is a GTD-Audio G622 wireless mike setup. The floorboard to the left is a Korg AH3000B, and hanging from the Trace stack is one of my custom straps from Steve Reece at Scoops Leather. Thanks for taking a look and letting readers dig on my rig.—"JERSEY JOHN" ROCHE

Got a rig you think we'd dig? Email a photo and a description to digmyrig@gmail.com.

BUZZ

In an effort to help cover the costs of his two-year-old nephew Matthew's leukemia treatments, Les Claypool put one of his two Pachyderm basses on Ebay. The 32"-scale 4-string, designed by Claypool and built by luthier Dan Maloney, has LED position markers, a Kahler tremolo bar, a custom split EMG pickup, and a single control knob. Bidding started at $900 but quickly rose to a winning bid of $50,599.99. Here's to Uncle Les' generosity and to a healthy future for Baby Matthew.

JAY BLAKESBERG

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Heroes & Inspiration Jaco, Oteil Burbridge, Matthew Garrison, and my mentor Steve Bailey
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How did you come to play bass?

I played guitar until the keyboard player at church asked me to hop on bass for a while. I got Jaco's debut album that Christmas, and from that point on, I was obsessed!

What's a lesson you've learned along the way?

The most important lesson I've learned through my musical journey is how important it is to keep your ears open to different styles of music. I try to learn from everything that I hear and try to keep an open-mind about learning new genres of music. I find musical inspiration from things as simple as listening to birds or the everyday hustle and bustle that many consider to be just "noise."

What are your musical goals?

What are your musical goals? To use my God-given gift to play music on my bass that will touch people's souls.

Want to introduce yourself? Find submission guidelines at bassplayer.com/november2012. Get selected for The Real World and receive a set of D'Addario EXL170 bass strings and a T-shirt. All those who submit will receive D'Addario's Fret-Buzz newsletter.

TIMELINE

This Month In Bass History November

8TH Led Zeppelin release its fourth, self-titled album. **1971**

11TH Allman Brothers bassist Berry Oakley dies after a motorcycle accident in Macon, Georgia. **1972** • Bill Wyman loses his driver's license and is fined after caught speeding in his Mercedes. **1972**

17TH The Who's double album *Quadrophenia* enters the UK album chart, peaking at No. 2. **1973** • Jethro Tull bass player John Glascock dies as the result of a congenital heart defect. **1979**

19TH Greg Ridley, bassist with Spooky Tooth and Humble Pie, dies from pneumonia. **2003**

20TH Upright virtuoso Gary Karr is born. **1941**

21ST Queen and David Bowie hit No. 1 with "Under Pressure." **1981**

22ND Aston "Family Man" Barrett is born. **1946** • Tina Weymouth is born. **1950**

25TH Donald "Duck" Dunn is born. **1941** • The Band holds a final, start-studded concert, "The Last Waltz," at the Winterland Ballroom in San Francisco. **1976**

26TH John Rostill, former bassist for the Shadows, dies after being electrocuted in his home studio. **1973**

26TH John McVie is born. **1945** • Cream plays their farewell concert, at the Royal Albert Hall in London. **1968**

30TH Nashville session legend Bob Moore is born. **1932** • Sly and the Family Stone's "Family Affair," with Sly Stone on bass, hits the No. 1 spot. **1971**

Aston "Family Man" Barrett

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The Year's Best In Bass

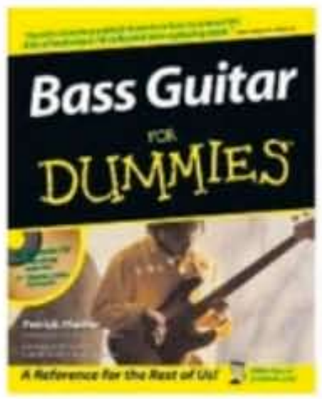
Q: What's the single best bass-related purchase you've made this year?

Mono M80 double bass case
—Kyle French

Ibanez BTB 5-string.
—Jorge Vélez

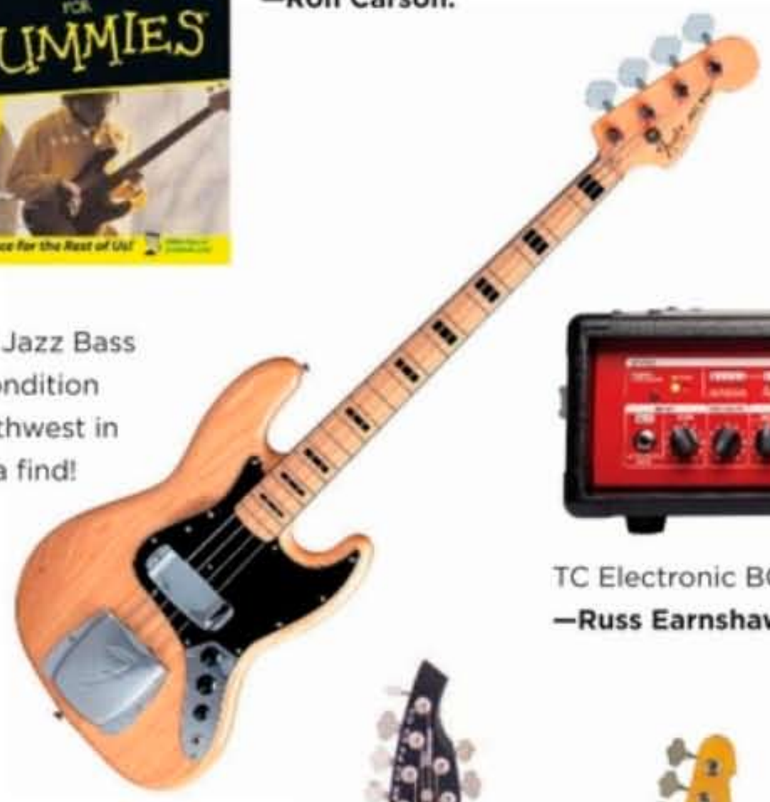
Kala UBass.
—Visawin Honda

Fender Select Jazz Bass.
—J. Peter Ross



The Bass For Dummies book, a title that some would say is redundant.
—Ron Carson.

The new Primus album.
—MrGizmo Simpson

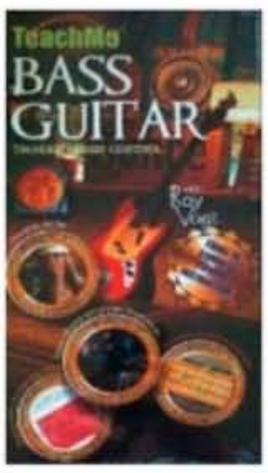


A 1975 Fender Jazz Bass in near mint condition from Bass Northwest in Seattle. What a find!
—Marc Colón

TC Electronic BC500 and cabs.
—Russ Earnshaw

An Alleva-Coppolo LM5. I've been gigging pro for over 20 years, and the feel, ease of use, and sonic possibilities (along with a healthy dose of Vitamin P for Practice) have helped me take it to the next level.
—Steve Earnhart

Yamaha TRB5P. Mmm, mmm, good!
—Arlin Hall



Roy Vogt's Teach Me Bass Guitar. Thanks for the review!
—Mike Cranston

MusicMan 6-string Bongo, stealth edition.
—Karl Shott

ESP LTD Vintage 204 bass, one of the best sounding and playing basses in my collection. It's inspired me to play a lot more.
—Josh Herald

My Boss RC2 Loop Station pedal.
-Janey Funk Fingers Fox

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MATT FREEMAN

-RANCID

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Zoom B9.1UT Multi-Effect.
—Peter J Reed

A Skype lesson with Jeff Berlin.
—Hohn F. Hebert

NS Design NXT5 electric upright bass.
—Davyd Norris

My first Warwick bass, a limited edition "dirty blonde" Thumb Bass.
—Christian de Mesones

Markbass F1 amp.
—Danny Buchannan

Fishman Fission Bass Powerchord pedal. Adds killer rhythm guitar sound through a separate signal. Sounds great!
—David L. Hastings

Aguilar Tone Hammer 500.
—Duane Say

D'Addario black nylon strings.
—Marius Goldhammer

Fender Custom Shop Pino Palladino Precision Bass.
—Jan Detremerie

Gallien-Krueger MB800. **—Joel Dawson**

Carvin BX500.
—Frankie Guerra

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—James Tooson

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—Donnie Fletcher

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Standing In The Shadows Of Hitsville

On August 11th, more than 100 members of the Facebook group Detroit Bass Players converged on the Motown Historical Museum for their second annual group photo. Founded by area bassist Craig Skoney, the collective includes such players as Kern Brantley, Ralphe Armstrong, and Al "The Burner" Turner.
facebook.com/groups/DetroitBassPlayers

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BASSNOTES

THE QUEEN EXTRAVAGANZA

François-Olivier Doyon

On John Deacon

BY JIMMY LESLIE

"I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A FAN OF BRITISH BASS PLAYERS SUCH AS John Taylor, Stuart Zender, and Chris Wolstenholme," says Canadian François-Olivier Doyon, "but I didn't know much about John Deacon's bass playing until I started digging into the Queen repertoire for gigging with the Queen Extravaganza." The keyboardist in Doyon's '80s revival band Karma Kameleons hipped him to online auditions for the official Queen tribute band directed by drummer Roger Taylor. Doyon landed the gig and was performing with Taylor and Brian May on *American Idol* in a flash.

Have you ever met John Deacon?

No. He retired from the music business a long time ago and gave Roger and Brian his blessing to continue without him.

What discoveries about Deacon's playing surprised you?

I was impressed by his versatility, and surprised by his melodicism. He composed "You're My Best Friend," and his bass line is melodic throughout the entire song, but he blends in with the band so well that you don't hear everything he is doing until you listen closely. Another impressive tune that's worth a close listen is Freddie Mercury's composition "The Millionaire Waltz," especially the piano-and-bass introduction. Deacon's counterpoint complements Freddie's piano part so well; it's a challenging melodic part to play steadily at that brisk tempo without any drums to lean on.

Do you have any other obscure favorites?

The funky bass on "The Invisible Man" is cool because it's very precise and tight. It sounds a lot like a synthesizer, but it's actually Deacon playing bass guitar. It's

INFO

EQUIP

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Fender Precision Bass with Bare Knuckle pickups, Squier Vintage Modified Jazz Bass '77
Rig '70s Ampeg SVT, Ampeg 8x10 cabinet
Strings Elixir (.050–.105)

CONNECT

Watch Francois-Olivier Doyon's online audition of "Somebody to Love," and then watch him play it with the Queen Extravaganza.
bassplayer.com/november2012

probably a Music Man StingRay, which he was known to use at the time. The part reminds me of something that Bernard Edwards would have played with Chic during the disco era, and the tone is something you'd expect in an '80s synth pop tune. It's nothing like Queen's rock anthems. It's amazing that Deacon could sound so different and be so funky.

Speaking of funky cool Queen tunes, what do you know about "Dragon Attack"?

Based on what I've heard from Roger and others, "Dragon Attack" came from a jam and was recorded on the spot in the studio. Wow! The way Deacon improvises around the main line when he's featured in the middle of the tune, and, well, the contributions from the whole band demonstrate that they all knew their stuff really well.

Does Deacon get the credit he deserves?

He's highly underrated. John Deacon doesn't necessarily come to mind when you ask people to name their favorite bass player. He's a low-profile guy; he was always in the shadows, but his playing was as important as any other musician in Queen. John Deacon is one of the players who brought the Fender Precision Bass to the forefront in the '70s—just as James Jamerson did in the '60s. **BP**

GARBAGE

Eric Avery Reverse Engineering

BY JON D'AURIA | PHOTO BY ERIC WARD

ERIC AVERY IS NO STRANGER TO BEING APPROACHED FOR BIG OPPORTUNITIES from landmark bands. After co-founding Jane's Addiction in 1985 and using the next six years to assemble several albums' worth of memorable bass lines, Avery departed and headed out in search of new projects. He worked on solo material, movie scoring, and even producing before he began getting calls for tryouts from Metallica, Tool, and Smashing Pumpkins. Avery kept course with his own material until he received a call from Shirley Manson of Garbage in 2005. The bassist clicked with the famed electro-alternative rockers, and he immediately joined them for their Bleed Like Me tour.

This year, Avery is back on the road with Garbage in support of *Not Your Kind of People*, reconstructing the tracks of Justin Meldal-Johnsen and reinterpreting the tracks he himself contributed to the record. Avery is also busy working on his second solo album and partnering with Brent Hinds (Mastodon), Ben Weinman (Dillinger Escape Plan) and Jon Theodore (the Mars Volta) to form GTO, which is fusing mathcore roots with Avery's own "simple is better" sensibility.

How are you making these Garbage bass lines your own in a live setting?

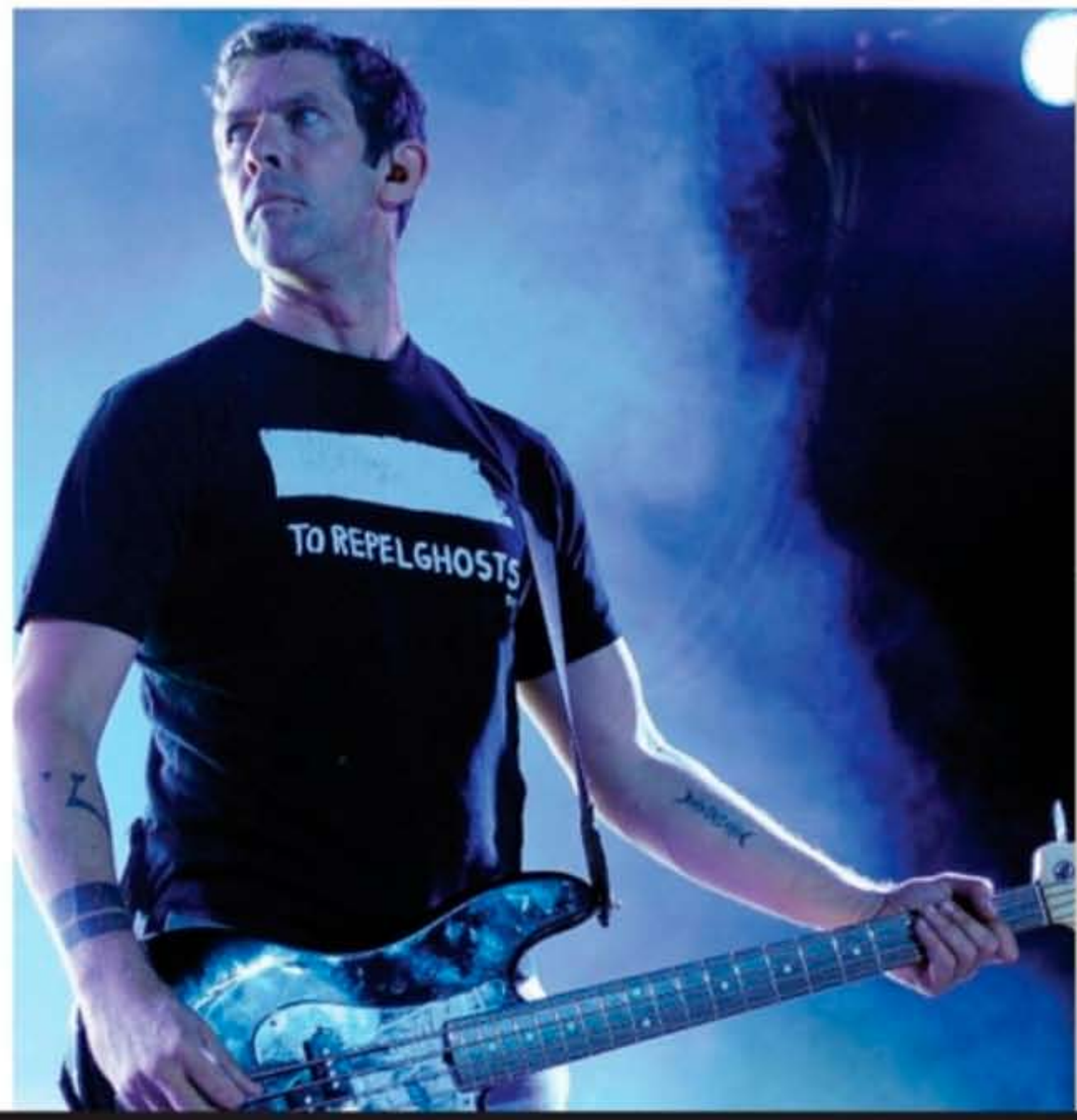
I've never been one to focus on what the kick drum is doing, but because there's so much going on in Garbage's music, Butch [Vig, drums] and I have made a fetish of what the kick does with the bass, and we find ways to get them together or keep them separate. But really, the Zen art to me is choosing the notes that I don't play.

Are there any parts from the album that you've changed drastically?

There are parts in Garbage's music where the bass is very jazzy sounding, which is not my thing—I'm not interested in creating more of that in my playing. So I had to figure out how to change it and make it my own. I decided to approach the jazzier songs in a dub way that has a round sound with no treble.

What is a Garbage show like from your perspective?

I occupy an unusual space, both figuratively and literally; the bass player is the one person who isn't an original member. So I've found myself performing to not get in their way. But at the same time I want to step it up and



INFO

LISTEN

Garbage, *Not Your Kind of People* [Stunvolume, 2012]

EQUIP

Bass Fender Jaguar Bass
Rig Line 6 POD HT Pro
Effects Ableton Live
Strings Dunlop Round-wound (.045-.105)

bring my best game to the performance. And that's true musically, as well.

Describe your writing technique.

I don't really have much technique with a capital T, because I'm entirely self-taught. I just modeled myself from the English bassists from the '80s—primarily Peter Hook from Joy Division. Ironically, I've found out that guitar players wrote a lot of those bass lines. I think that really sculpted my melodic approach as a bass player.

How did your time with Jane's Addiction shape you as a bassist?

Playing with Steven [Perkins, drums] and Dave [Navarro, guitar] all those years was very formidable. If I hadn't played with guys who play like that, my bass playing would probably be a lot busier nowadays. Both of them play so tastefully, it forced me to find a few notes and repeat them just to lock it all down. And that kept us all in line and kept us away from fusion land. They always pulled Perry and me in a rock direction, which made me more of an athletic bass player.

What's your take on the importance of music theory in a rock setting?

I have learned a lot in terms of formal music theory, and I feel I've done a good job of not letting it take away from my natural way of writing. Luckily, my bass strap isn't fastened high up near my neck yet. You have to have an understanding of theory as a bass player, because if you do something weird like throw in some strange inversion, it's going to make the whole sound misshapen. I always just come back to focusing on the principal of bass.

What makes your playing so influential to others?

I believe people cite me as an influence because of the band I was in, and the role that the bass played in that band. I learned early on that less is more, and I knew to stick with it. I always used to say that I write bass lines that I could teach my mom how to play. And some rock songs are unidentifiable if you play the bass parts on their own. I want mine to be distinctive even when they're isolated.

How did GTO first assemble?

We all converged out in Austin, and we jammed together and then left and never really followed up. About eight months later, Brent did an interview and mentioned it. That got a lot of attention, and the idea was exciting people. So we decided that we should probably pursue it. We have a pretty substantial amount of material now. It's challenging for me, because it's a lot of weird time signatures, and I have to keep up with those guys and their mathcore tendencies. **BP**

RETRO-RAMA

Höfner 173 "Artist"

BY DAVE POMEROY | PHOTO BY MICKEY DOBO

FOUNDED IN GERMANY IN 1887, HÖFNER may forever be typecast by low-end aficionados as the company that made Sir Paul McCartney's 500/1 "Beatle Bass." After World War II, Höfner relocated its factory to Bubenreuth, Germany, and kicked into high gear with the post-war guitar boom. Höfner made quite a few notable basses over the years, including one of my favorites, the jazz guitar-styled hollowbody 333, later called the President bass. Stu Sutcliffe played a 333 before Paul took over bass duties in the Fab Four and ordered a left-handed violin bass from Höfner.

This slim solidbody gem, courtesy of Nashville guitar shop Music City Pickers (musiccitypickers.com), was built in 1962 as part of the 173 guitar line. Many short-scale basses of this era are simply slightly larger and longer guitars. In this case, it is apparent that someone at Höfner must have been aware of the work of a certain Mr. Fender in California. During

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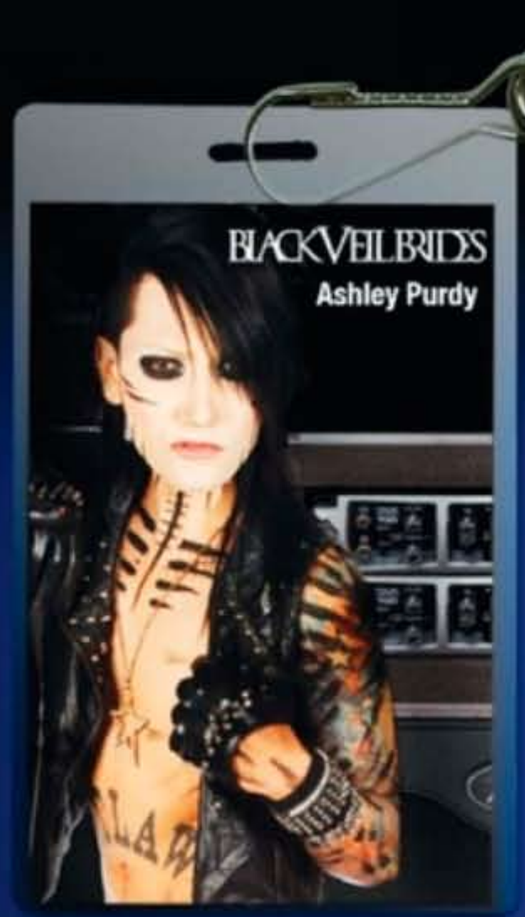

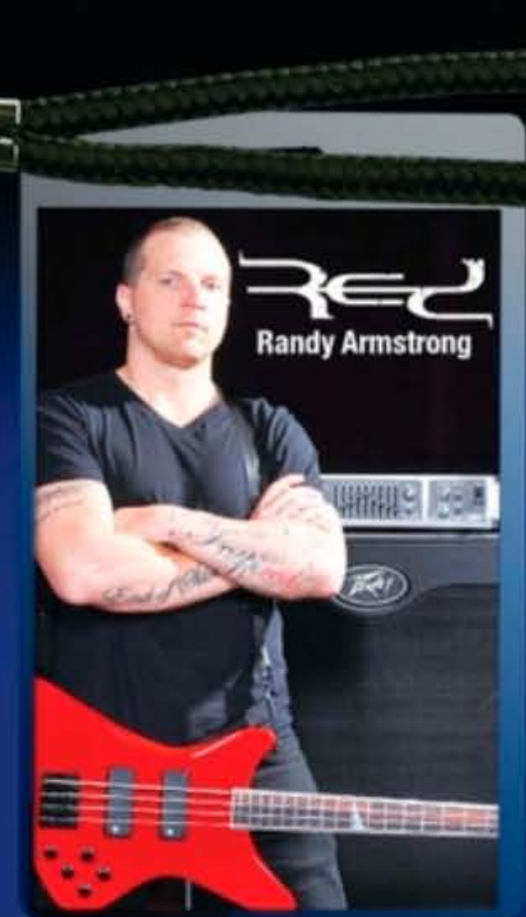

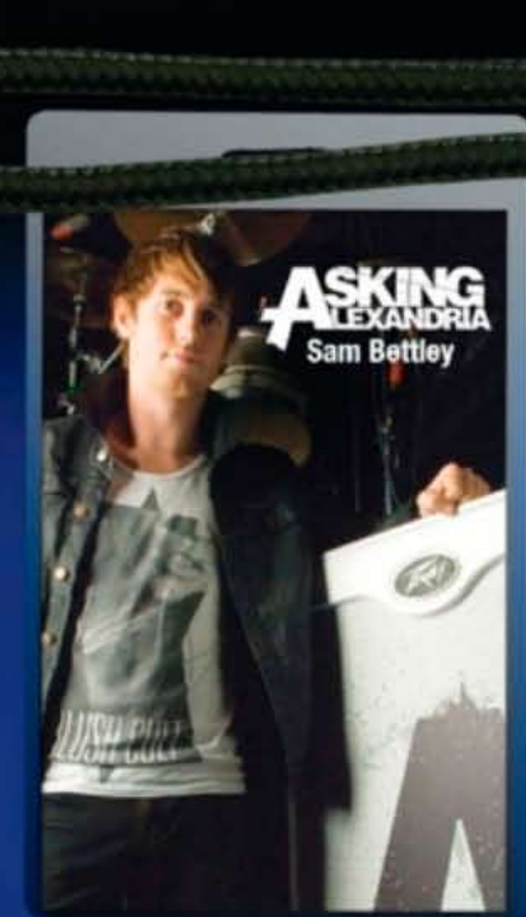

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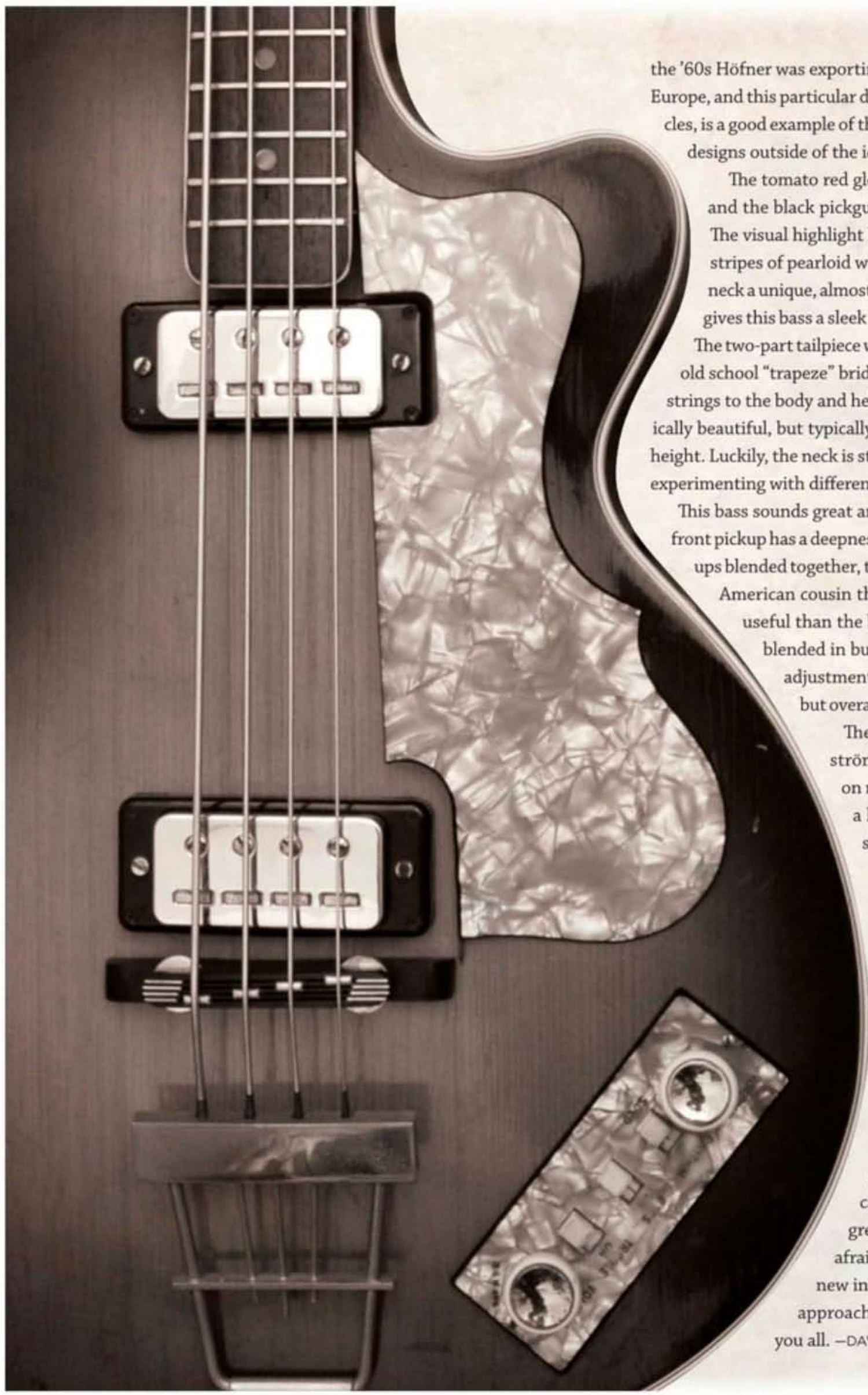

the '60s Höfner was exporting different versions of its instruments all over Europe, and this particular design, also known as the Artist bass in some circles, is a good example of the transitional nature of many of the company's designs outside of the iconic Beatle Bass.

The tomato red glossy finish is still in great shape after 50 years, and the black pickguard and matching headstock are a nice touch. The visual highlight has to be the fingerboard inlays, which are two stripes of pearloid with a black stripe in the middle, which gives the neck a unique, almost 3-D appearance. The machined metal hardware gives this bass a sleek "modern" look, especially given the time frame. The two-part tailpiece with a screw-on top is an interesting hybrid of an old school "trapeze" bridge and a more modern approach, marrying the strings to the body and helping with sustain. The metal saddle is aesthetically beautiful, but typically for this era, it has no adjustments other than height. Luckily, the neck is straight and intonation is fairly accurate, though experimenting with different string gauges could possibly dial it in further.

This bass sounds great and feels more solid than most short-scales. The front pickup has a deepness that belies the short scale, and with both pickups blended together, the 173 has a punchy sound, not unlike its larger American cousin the Fender Jazz. The neck pickup is much more useful than the bridge pickup, which gives a nice crunch when blended in but sounds a little thin on its own. The polepiece adjustments offer a way to tweak individual strings' level, but overall this bass is very even and devoid of dead spots.

The neck is slim but fairly thick, not unlike Hagström or Eko basses of that time period. The bolt-on neck's profile sits rather high above the body on a level even with the relatively tall pickups. The shorter scale length imparts a nice "rubberyness" to the tone and feel. This bass has roundwound strings, which give an extra growl that flatwounds would probably de-emphasize. I can guess that this would make an excellent reggae bass with flats or nylon tapewound strings. Bending strings is a blast and gives solo playing another dimension.

This bass has a cool look, and its Fender-inspired style is quite different from the violin/jazz-guitar influence that was prevalent on earlier Höfner basses. It is well made and really is much like a miniaturized Jazz Bass. The 173 came and went fairly quickly, but it survives as a great example of a venerable company not being afraid to stretch out away from its roots and absorb new influences. We can all learn something from that approach! Until next time, peace, love, and grooves to you all. —DAVE POMEROY

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KARNIVOOL

Jon Stockman

Ringmaster

BY FREDDY VILLANO | PHOTO BY MARCUS HOLLAND-MORITZ

GROWING UP IN PERTH, AUSTRALIA had some unique advantages for Jon Stockman and his bandmates in Karnivool. "We weren't driven to conform to a sound that would guarantee success," he says. Still, on the band's most recent release, *Sound Awake*, Karnivool achieved international acclaim. The melodically dense and rhythmically complex prog-rock soundscapes on the album—on "Goliath" and "Set Fire To The Hive" in particular—are dominated by Stockman's monolithic bass line, which utilizing a 6-string bass in *BF#BEGC* tuning.

On *Sound Awake*, you have a wicked combination of groove and growl.

[Producer] Forrester Savell and I spent a lot of time giving each track a signature bass sound. We really tried to get the right elements that suited what was going on with the drums and guitars—we were able to hear where the bass could sit and function the best.

How does that translate to live performance?

I've got two basses I use live, and that's enough for me to get the basics of what I used in the studio. Studio magic is better left for the studio; something that sounds cool in the studio might be too hard to get out of a PA speaker in a club.

How did your sound develop?

When I started playing with Karnivool, I had no idea how to get a good bass tone. Forrester was at my first gig, and he introduced himself and said, "I need to talk to you about your bass tone ... it's terrible." Ever since then, I've been developing my understanding of my bass sound. In terms of EQ, I've found it's more about getting rid of things you don't want in the mix.

What's up with your tuning?

When I went from 4- to 6-string, I felt it was a huge jump to go from the *B* to *G*. I needed an accessible F# so I could just play the 5th above the *B*. Most of our songs are in the key of *B*, so my tuning now is *BF#BEGC*. We've developed other tunings, but I try to stick with that because I don't want to take a bunch of different basses on the road with me.

Was there a learning curve adapting to that tuning?

Definitely. And there wasn't anyone to teach me. There are some really interesting patterns you can do, especially in the high registers—a lot of minor stuff is really easy to play on the top three strings. It's not logical where things are laid out, but once you get used to it, it's got a really beautiful, open sound and feel. **BP**

INFO

LISTEN

Karnivool, *Sound Awake* [Sony, 2009]

EQUIP

Bass 6-string Warwick Thumb NT, 6-string custom Warwick Corvette
Rig Ashdown BTA 400, ABM 500RC EVO III, and 427 Small Block heads; Ashdown USA 8x10 and Neo 810 cabinets
Strings Elixir Nanoweb (.032-.130)
Picks Dunlop Tortex Triangle 1.0mm
Effects Boss GEB-7 Bass Equalizer, Boss ODB-3 Bass OverDrive, Boss OC-3 Super Octave, Boss NS-2 Noise Suppressor, Boss DD-20 Digital Delay, Boss ME-20 Guitar Multiple Effects, Eventide ModFactor, Eventide TimeFactor, Tech 21 XXL Bass Edition Overdrive, Tech 21 SansAmp Bass Driver DI, Tech 21 VT Bass, Tech 21 Red Ripper, Ashdown James LoMenzo HyperDrive, MXR M288 Bass Octave Deluxe, MXR M-80 Bass DI, Radial JDI direct box, Bigshot i/o true bypass instrument selector, Bigshot ABY true bypass amp selector, Aguilar Tone Hammer DI/Preamp, GigRig Midi 14, GigRig Generator, GigRig EvenFlo Adapters, Lehle Little Lehle Looper, Lehle P-Split, DBX160A Compressor/Limiter

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MAKER'S MARK

Charlie Chadwick of Chadwick Folding Bass

BY DAVE ROE

WITH OVER 100 SATISFIED TRAVELING bassists now using his revolutionary folding upright, Nashvillian Charlie Chadwick has secured a place in the history of the instrument. A few years ago, Nashville session great Dave Pomeroy broke the news of this innovation in these very pages. Now it's time to let readers know a little more about the man himself. Charlie is obviously a talented inventor, but those of us who live here in Music City also know him as an extraordinary, well-rounded player at home not only in the jazz idiom, but in roots music in general. Chadwick also maintains a busy session schedule as an engineer/producer in his own home studio, with dozens of records to his credit. I talked with Charlie in his home-studio–workshop.

You grew up in San Diego. Did you start out on upright bass?

No, I started out on electric bass, playing blues and rock & roll. As I evolved, I found myself listening to more jazz and progressive music. I landed some gigs with a bandleader and sax player in San Diego by the name of Joe Morrello, and I had to learn standards, mostly on fretless. Around that time, I heard the Bill Evans Trio's Village Vanguard records with Scott LaFaro, and the sound of LaFaro's upright just blew my mind! That's when I knew that if I was going to continue in that direction, I really needed to start getting into upright. I bought an 1890s Knilling flatback, and off I went.

What inspired your move to Nashville?

Some of my peers in the San Diego area—Nathan East and Cliff Almond, to name a couple—had become successful and gone on to bigger gigs. Their success made me realize that it was possible to move everything into the national arena. I just wanted to get out and see the world and play with bigger acts. I realized that in order to do that, I had to move to L.A., New York, or Nashville. I'm not sure why I chose Nashville; it just felt right. After I got here, I met Dave Pomeroy, and he steered me into who and what I should be listening to, and it's worked out just fine for me.

What were your first few gigs like in town?

Dave let me know right away that in Nashville, the song and songwriters were king. Before that, I always looked at lyrics as if they were what took up space between the playing! I now know otherwise. I learned

INFO

CHADWICK FOLDING BASS

Builder Charlie Chadwick
Location Nashville, Tennessee
Notable players Christian McBride, Barry Bales, Charles Humphrey III, Alan Bartram
Contact foldingbass.com

LISTEN

Suzy Bogguss, *American Folk Songbook* [Loyal Duchess, 2011]; Leon Russell, *Moonlight & Love Songs* [Leon Russell, 2002]; John Jorgensen, *Ultraspontane* [Pharoah, 2007]

CHEDWICK'S EQUIP

Upright basses Various Shen uprights, Chadwick Folding Bass (on the road), Unknown carved bass, 1890s Knilling carved flatback
Electric basses Custom fretless 4-string with Seymour Duncan pickups, Yamaha TRB5 with Bartolini pickups and Aguilar preamp, Fender 50th Anniversary Custom P-Bass, Höfner 500/1
Rig Fishman Full Circle pickup and Shure SM98 mic blended through a Headway EDB-1 Acoustic preamp, and on to an Eden Traveler (or whatever rig is available)

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the other side of bass playing—support for the tune *and* the soloists. I started gigging with local songwriters like Kenny Walker and Nick Pelligrino. I can't stress how important this is and was. It leads to sessions and gigs.

You've also had a few big country gigs as well.

I've been very lucky to have toured and recorded with some amazing artists: Pam Tillis, Crystal Gayle, and Shelby Lynn, to name a few. I'm now working with the great Suzy Bogguss in a cool little trio.

I personally love your work in the realm of Gypsy jazz, in particular, with John Jorgensen's Gypsy jazz band. How did you end up so adept at that?

I began working with a local Gypsy group, the Gypsy Hombres, and I just fell in love with that style. It really set me up for my gig with John Jorgensen. I played in that group for five years. It was awesome to travel the world with such a great group of players.

Was this road work what inspired your folding bass?

Absolutely! I was doing an appearance on Jay Leno, and the rental bass that they brought me was so hideous, that it just pissed me off. I knew that somehow, some way, I could build something that would make my life better and more consistent on the road. I wasn't a fan of electric uprights. So, I began taking basses apart, trying to rebuild them into a travel bass that was a real bass. The turning point was when I came up with the idea of folding the neck into the body of the bass instead of removing it. Then I hooked up at a NAMM Show with bass maker Sam Shen, who was so intrigued that he helped me by providing basses for me to destroy!

You've shown a willingness to incorporate ideas provided by your customers. How important is that to you?

Very—a lot of my design improvements have come from stuff that happens to my customers. With the brutality of air travel, things break. When they do, I try to find a way to make them better and more durable. It's a policy of mine to retrofit all of my basses with these improvements. I've only had two people return their basses, but only because they were not carved tops—they just missed that sound. Well, guess what? That's now my next project, a carved-top folding bass! **BP**

BP RECOMMENDS

LARRY GRAHAM
RAISE UP [Razor & Tie]

Larry Graham's first album in 13 years is an instant reminder that unless you've seen him live over the past decade you haven't been experiencing the full force of funk, as established by a cornerstone founder of the idiom. After an all-percussion opening piece that links drumline to R&B, Graham and his fertile 5-piece band (seen at Bass Player LIVE! 2011, and fortified by Denmark's Millfield Horns) segue into the surging "Throw-N-Down the Funk"—led by Larry's deadly thumb lilt. "It's Alright," a 1975 Graham Central Station redo follows, sitting at the same bright tempo but with a subtley altered feel, thanks to different layers of band syncopation—a great example of the depth of Graham's groove genius. Two other '70s GCS covers also sparkle: Al Green's "It Ain't No Fun to Me," which rides Larry's double-stop-accented eighth-notes, and "Now Do U Wanta Dance," a classic Graham vocoder feature built around his octaver-inflected, off-the-downbeat bass line. In addition, Stevie Wonder's "Higher Ground" receives Larry's distinct shuffle stamp.

Graham's considerable and unique vocal prowess gets the spotlight on the 12/8 bluesy ballad, "Shoulda, Woulda, Coulda," and the pop crooning "Hold You Close." Elsewhere, Raphael Saadiq lends vocals to the uplifting, backbeat-driven "One Day," while Prince guest drums and sings on the slinky, social commentating title track, and adds stinging guitar to the sick gospel boogie stride of "Movin'." Graham dedicates the disc to people everywhere strugging to overcome adversity; *Raise Up* is both an inspiring return and soundtrack for his cause. —CHRIS JISI

MESHELL NDEGEOCELLO
POUR UNE ÂME SOUVERAINE: A DEDICATION TO NINA SIMONE [Naïve]

This tribute from one recording-industry maverick to another is a master class in paying homage while imbuing a classic set list with distinctive personality. Armed with killer old-school Jazz Bass tone and a team of superlative co-conspirators, Meshell brings 21st-century production and an intimate, unhurried pace to these standards while keeping the spirit of the originals intact. Simone would be proud. —E.E. BRADMAN

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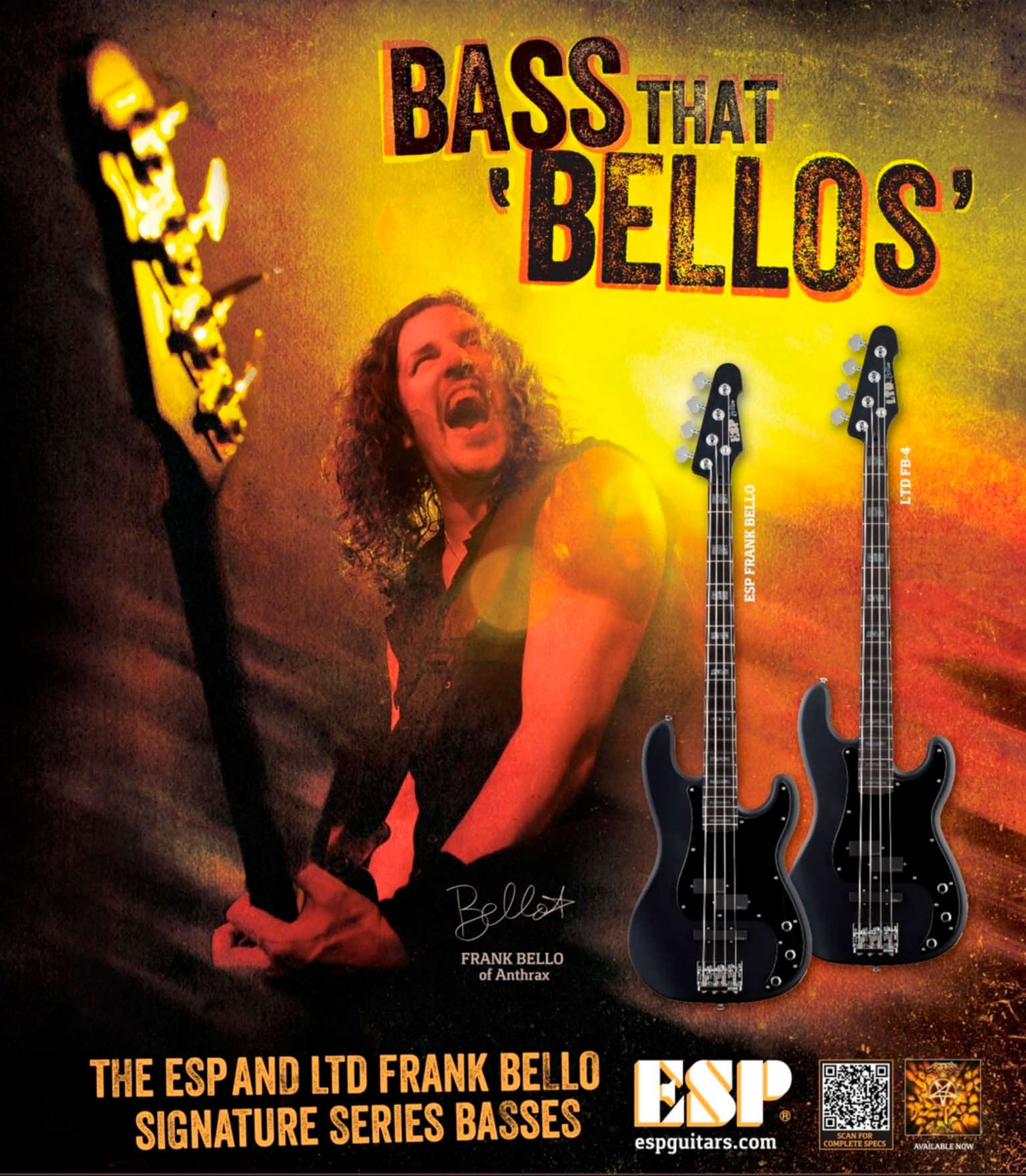

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Street $750

Contact fbass.com

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Street $300

Contact squierguitars.com

EPIPHONE

Toby Deluxe-V Bass

Epiphone looks back to yesteryear with the Toby Deluxe-V, a 5-string version of the bass originally designed by Michael Tobias. The Deluxe-V's radiata body, hard rock maple neck, and rosewood fingerboard are matched with master volume, pickup blend, and master EQ controls, plus an active Tonexpressor Bass Enhancement Control, which both boosts and cuts bass and treble frequencies simultaneously to add precise bottom end. The Deluxe-V is available in ebony, translucent red, and vintage sunburst finishes.

Street $300

Contact epiphone.com

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Street $6

Contact stagetrixproducts.com

IBANEZ

SR256 Bass

Ibanez adds another active 6-string to its SR series with the 34"-scale, 24-fret SR256PW, which boasts a mahogany body, a bolt-on three-piece maple neck, and a rosewood fingerboard. The SR256PW's pickups are a pair of the company's punchy CAP EXF-N2 pickups, and the EQB-IIID preamp gives you control over volume, balance, bass, mid, and treble.

Street $400

Contact ibanez.com

PLUCKING PLATEAU

MARCUS MILLER REINVENTS HIMSELF ON *RENAISSANCE*

BY CHRIS JISI

CHANGE HAS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE career of Marcus Miller the musician for hire. He's gone from young New York City session ace to Grammy-winning producer, composer, and multi-instrumentalist for such divergent talents as Miles Davis, Luther Vandross, David Sanborn, and Aretha Franklin, to sought-after film composer. So, the instantly identifiable voice of Marcus Miller the solo artist—forged on his '77 Fender Jazz Bass over eight studio and live albums since 1993—has been both a welcome contrast and a

MICHAEL SAUVAGE

MICHAEL SAUVAGE

comfort. But the four years since 2008's *Marcus* have clearly had an impact on Miller's muse, and the end result is nothing short of striking.

Renaissance is a departure on several fronts. Leaner, lighter production enables the focus to fall on Miller's blazing young band: saxophonist Alex Han, drummer Louis Cato, keyboardists Kris Bowers and Federico Peña, trumpeters Sean Jones and Maurice Brown, and guitarist Adam Agati, with guest turns from Rubén Blades, Dr. John, Gretchen Parlato, and Adam Rogers. To fuel their fire, Miller reached deep to come up with retro-leaning, soul-resonating compositions rich in nuance and twists. Couple that with his always-inspired recasting of a handful of cover songs from across the musical landscape, and the Brooklyn-born bassist's latest ranks among his very best.

Perhaps the real revelation on *Renaissance*'s 13 tracks is Miller's work on fretted, fretless, and upright bass (dig his doghouse elocution in all registers). Marcus has joined the exclusive club of his frequent tour mates Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter, seemingly able to play anything that comes into his mind without technical limitations and with complete emotional conviction. The ideas flow from his fingers with such ease, it's only upon re-listening that you realize the range of techniques and degree of difficulty required to fly so far and free. Also in common with the aforementioned masters is the way Miller leads and guides

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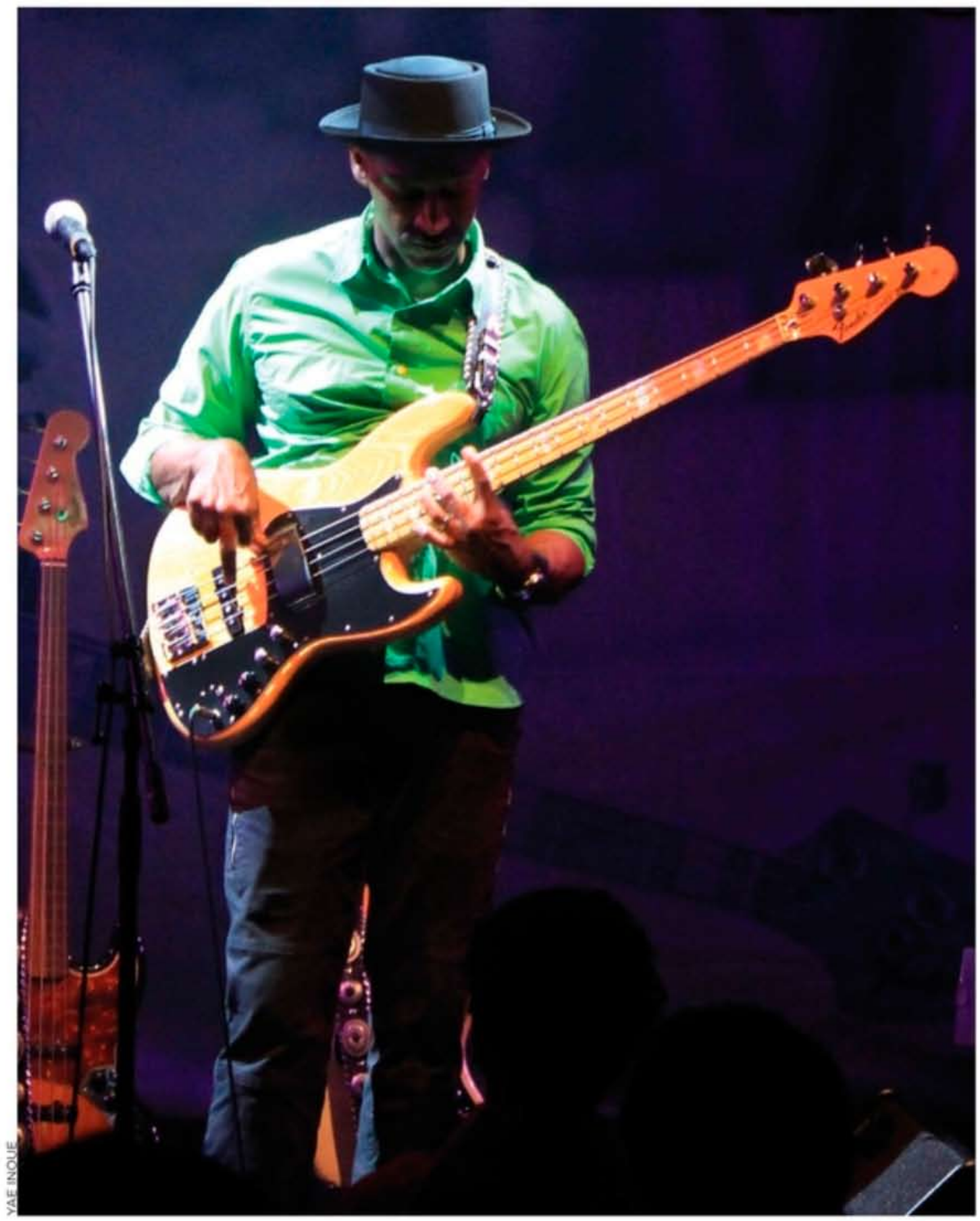

YAE INOUE

his eager ensemble with his instrument. Whether playing a bass line, sharing a melody, or supporting a soloist, there's a constant sense of coaxing and challenging that brings out the best in all parties. We spoke to Marcus in Los Angeles and Paris to find out what led to his urban renewal.

***Renaissance* marks a new direction for you. How did you arrive at this music?**

After my previous studio album, I wanted to go in a different direction—but that can be difficult to do when your *life* isn't moving in a different direction. So I put myself in some new situations: I did a live album with an orchestra, and I did SMV with Stanley Clarke and Victor Wooten and a Miles tribute tour with Herbie Hancock and Wayne Shorter. All of those experiences sort of cleansed my palette and opened me up to fresh inspiration. But the project that most immediately led to this CD was the 18 months I toured with Tutu Revisited. I had gotten a young band in place, hoping they would add a new flavor and help me update this [Miles Davis] music from the past, and that's exactly what happened. I was really enjoying the energy, so I thought it would be nice to take my time and compose some strong material for these musicians, to showcase the sound we found and developed on tour. I ended up calling the album *Renaissance* because we're recalling

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MICHAEL SAUVAGE

a time when it was all about the musicians interacting with each other, and the feeling and magic that was a result.

How did you approach this new sound as a producer?

It was a reboot for me there, as well. When I started producing in the late '70s and early '80s, it was hard to do a well-produced record; you really had to know your way around the studio. So I developed skills in that area, and on some of my albums I was playing the production as much as I was playing the instruments and the music. You could take my records and turn them up in your Jeep, with all the 808s [sounds from a Roland TR-808 drum machine] banging around! At this point, I'm not as interested in that. The focus on this CD is just the compositions and the performance, so it's much more immediate sounding. I tried to focus on making the writing clear and making sure there was nice balance between the way it feels and the way it makes you think.

"Redemption" is striking for the urgency and ambiguous tonality of the bass line, as well as the call-and-answer role of the bass in the bridge.

That fractured sense is intentional. "Redemption" is about how in tough economic times you can really lose your spirit and get beaten down. So, you have to look deep within and figure out what makes you valuable and unique. That's why the tonality is vague, to represent searching for that goal. And the bass line is pushing and encouraging, saying, Don't stop. Keep looking—it's in there; everyone has their special qualities. Ultimately it's a song of support and hope.

As for the bridge, when we first ran it down someone in the band said, "Oh, we're doing jazz!" I smiled because to me, my music is all the same, just with different accents—you accentuate the harmony here, the groove there. Now I'm realizing some people didn't hear the harmonies on my previous albums due to there being other aspects of the mix that grabbed their attention. That's one of the benefits of stripping down the sound on this CD: It's just the composition and the band. My music is always a combination of R&B, funk, and jazz; this record presents a different blend of those ingredients.

"February" is indicative of the role your bass plays throughout the CD, moving from melody to bass line to countermelody and back to melody, as well as both supporting and leading the soloists.

I was trying to find an integrated, organic way to lead this young band. A lot of cats think all you

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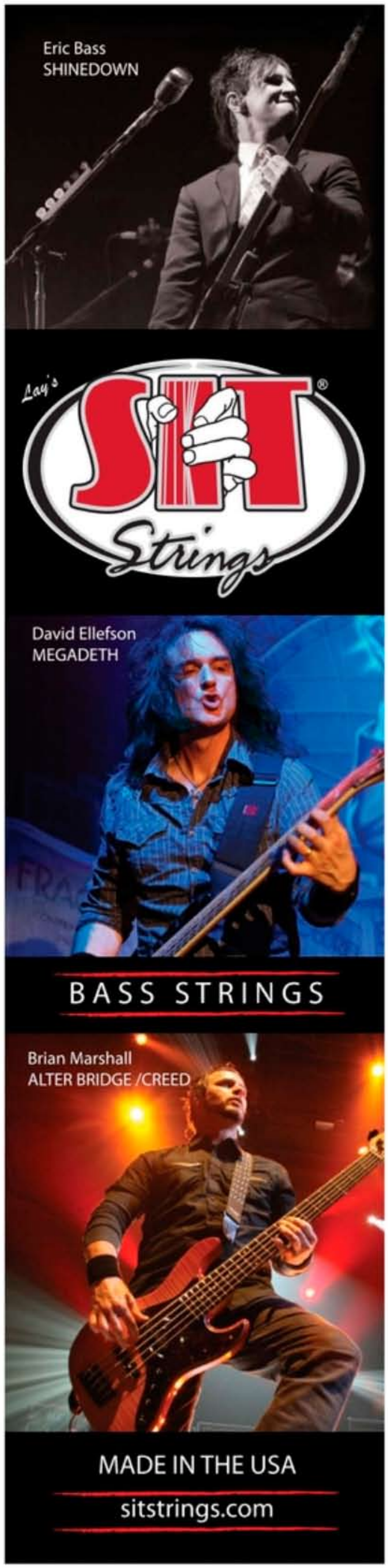

YAE INOUE

have to do is step out front, play the melody, and have everyone follow, but I was looking for a different way to lead and command; I wanted to be more of a supporter who occasionally comes in and comments on what's going on, and then every once in a while, when it's necessary, take over and play the melody or suggest an improvised direction. The bass is such a beautiful instrument in that it can go under the music and support from there, or sit on top of the music. I tried to show the whole bass picture with the way these songs are constructed.

"February" itself reflects the creation of the CD. Late winter is when everything is cocooned, yet there's plenty of growing and developing going on beneath the surface. I was writing this music during that period, excited to reach springtime and unwrap it for the band, and see how we would arrive at the finished product. It's about possibilities; that's the feeling I was going for.

"Jekyll & Hyde" typifies your ability to musically blend widely contrasting sections.

Originally it was called "Wayne Hendrix." The first part reminded me of an Art Blakely & the Jazz Messengers soul-jazz melody. Then, when I decided it was time to change the channel and I wrote the next section, it reminded me of the kind of rock Jimi Hendrix and his Band Of Gypsys would play—sort of soul-rock. During a mix session, my engineer, Dave Ward, said, "When do we get to that Jekyll and Hyde tune?" I liked that title better, so I changed it. At the end of the song, I tried to make both sections come together by playing the soul-jazz part with a hard-rock edge. What really drives the tune, though, is the melody. I wanted to find notes that really get in your bones. I watch people at the sessions, like when they're packing up afterwards, and see who is humming what—or, the next day, who's still humming the tune. And sometimes they'll tell me, "Man, that tune is on my damn nerves; I was humming it all night!"

What's the stylistic influence of "Interlude: Nocturnal Mist" and "Revelation"?

"Mist" is a beautiful piece written by Luther "Mano" Hanes that I played on bass clarinet for Israel & New Breed's *A Timeless Christmas* CD [Sony, 2006]; I thought I'd cover it on bass here. It leads into "Revelation," which is my compositional answer to "Mist." It's in 6/8, and harmonically it reflects Trane during his *Crescent* [Impulse, 1964] period, with songs like "Alabama" [*Live at Birdland*, Impulse, 1963], which are sort of based on a simple minor triad. But then Alex Hahn starts opening up the tonality in his saxophone solo, and in response I begin commenting intently from below.

Your signature placement of a bass anthem and a hit-song cover can be found in "Detroit" and War's "Slippin' Into Darkness."

I have a collection of bass lines in my head that

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[[[[ROOT REVIVAL]]]]

MICHAEL SAUVAGE

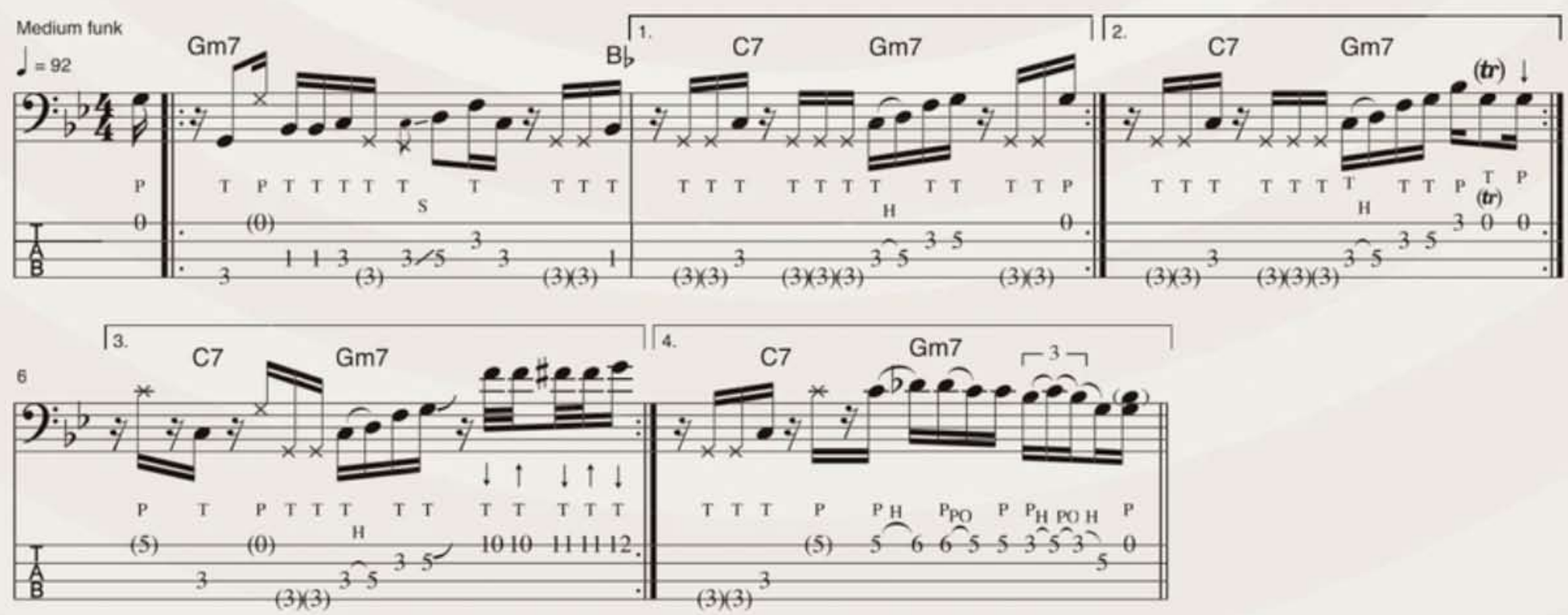
Marcus Miller's '77 Jazz Bass plays a real "renaissance man" role on his latest CD, showing fluency in bebop upright-speak, soul and funk finger and thumb grooves, blues-rock riffing, and machine-conversant hip-hop strides—as well as delivering lead and countermelodies in a rainbow of vocal and horn dialects.

Example 1 shows the opening groove/melody of "Detroit." Use the ghost-notes that precede the upbeat *B♭* and *C* at the end of the bar 1 and the beginning of all four endings to help you firmly nail those accents. Also, be mindful of the up-and-down thumbing required in the 3rd ending. Overall, Miller advises, "sit back just a tad."

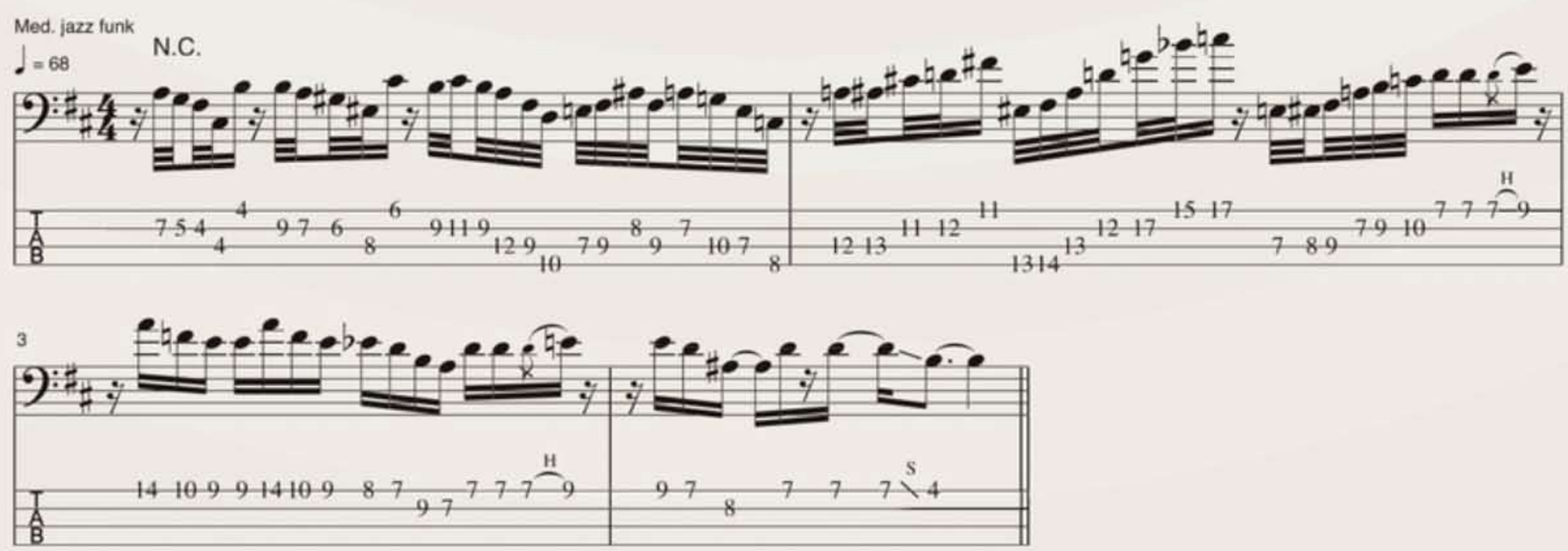
Example 2 contains the bass-and-horns unison melody 5:50 into "CEE-TEE-EYE." Although there are no supporting chords, Miller wrote the lines by experimenting with extended harmonies over the song's B minor tonality; for example, beat two of bar 1 outlines a *C♯7(♯5)* chord. See if you can analyze some of the other tonalities he implies. Says Marcus, "I wrote it for the horns, but after showing it to them on bass in rehearsal, I decided to play it, too. The key is to get your fingerings first and play it in time; then listen to where the horns push and lay back, and try to match their phrasing."

continued on page 49

EX. 1



EX. 2



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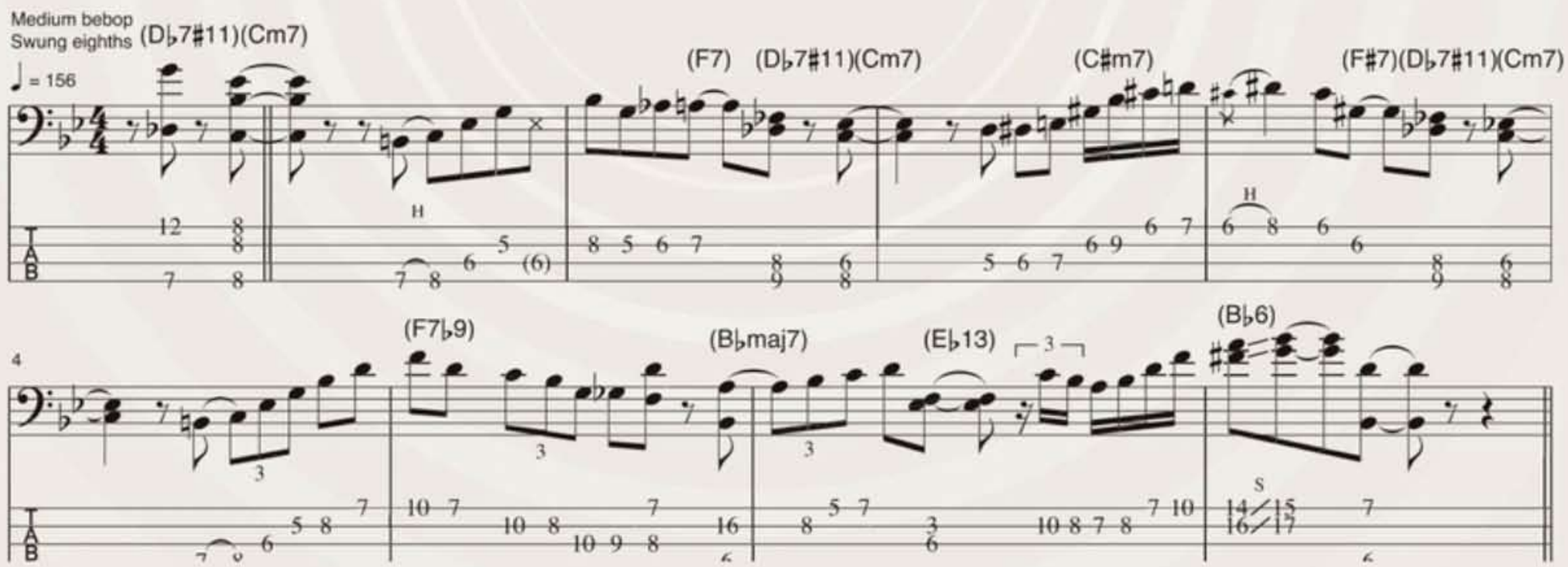
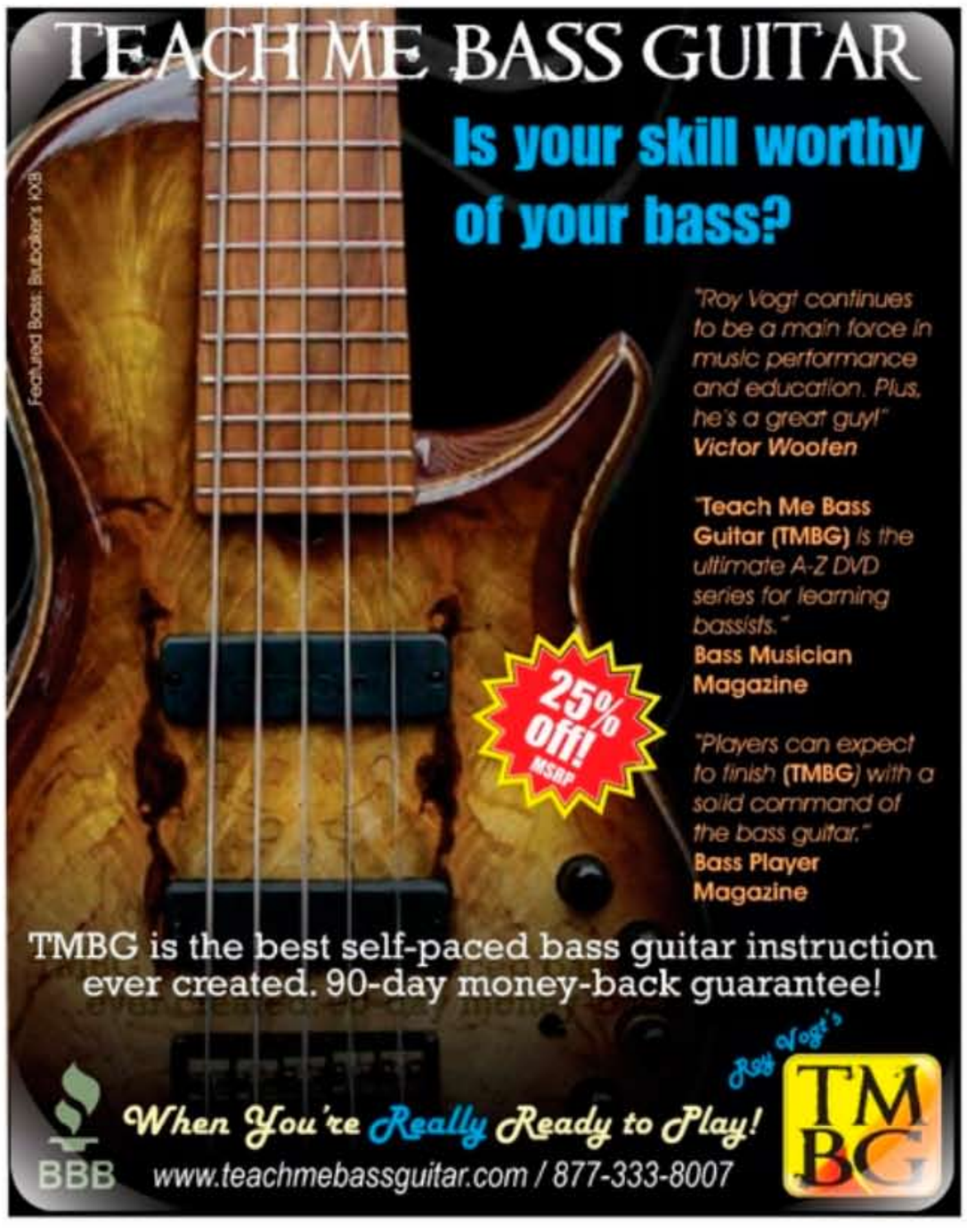
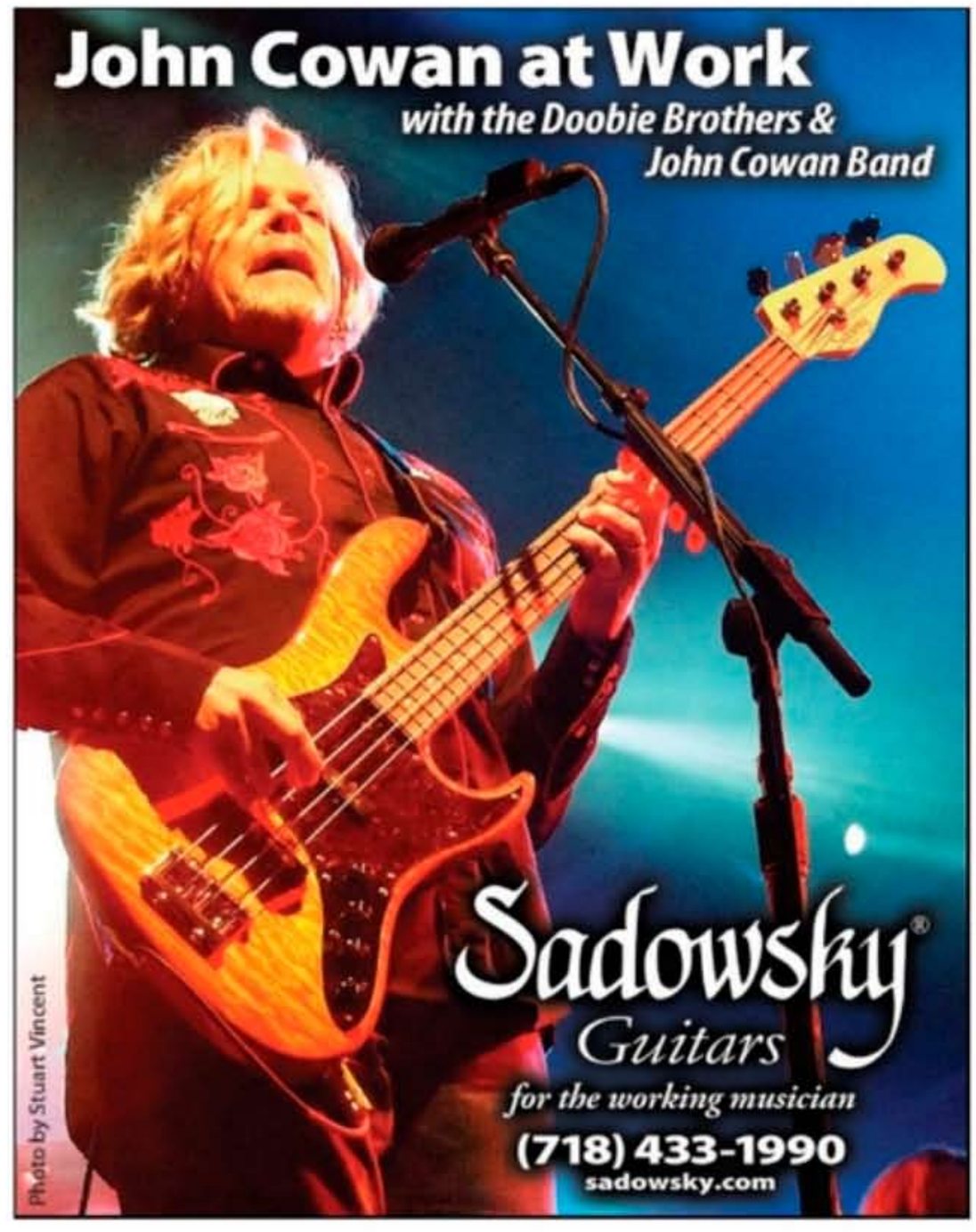
Continued from page 46

EX. 3



Finally, in an exclusive to BP readers, **Ex. 3** is taken from "Rebop," a solo-bass bonus track on overseas releases of *Renaissance*. Miller wrote and dedicated the piece to his upright influences Paul Chambers and Sam Jones. The excerpt begins at the 0:12 mark, which is the second A section of the AABA form. Listen for how well Miller cops '50s-style post-bop phrasing. "If you play all of the eighth-notes the same way, eventually it sounds corny, so those guys would push every fourth note or so, to break it up. Check out records with Paul and Sam soloing, as well as cats like [pianist] Wynton Kelly, and dig their phrasing." Also catch the interesting way Marcus implies the chords in bars 6–8, using only two notes at a time. He adds, "I'll be putting up a video clip of me recording 'Rebop' on my website."





[[[SOLO SIDES]]]

Renaissance, Concord Jazz; *A Night in Monte Carlo*, Dreyfus; *Marcus*, Concord; *Master of All Trades*, American Masters (DVD); *Silver Rain*, Koch; *The Ozell Tapes*, Telarc; *M2*, 3 Deuces; *Live & More*, GRP; *Tales*, PRA; *The Sun Don't Lie*, PRA; *Marcus Miller*, Warner Bros.; *Suddenly*, Warner Bros.

I've been using for 30 years, and I don't realize it until I see some clip of me playing one while trying out a bass. Then I go, Wow, I'd better make a song out of that. "Detroit" came from one of those bass lines, just a funky tune named for a funky place. And "Slippin' Into Darkness" is another bass line that has been with me for a long time. I remember being on gigs where the audience wasn't responding to jazz and we'd break out "Slippin'," and everything would be fine, so I thought it would be fun to record. We went in an jammed it out, and I edited it down from a 15-minute track. Like "CEE-TEE-EYE," later on the CD, it has a sort of Oliver Nelson-meets-CTI vibe.

You cover a recent hit in Janelle Monáe's "Tightrope."

What I dug was how she took what sounded like old New Orleans boogie-woogie and made it into something new. I thought I could accent the New Orleans aspect, so I got Dr. John to hang out with me and told him I wanted him to rap on it. He said, "I've never rapped before," and I said, "Don't worry—I'll show you how!" We messed around in the studio and you can hear him really enjoying himself. I played the main bass line on a Kolstein Busetto Bass, and I overdubbed some electric bass melodies and solos.

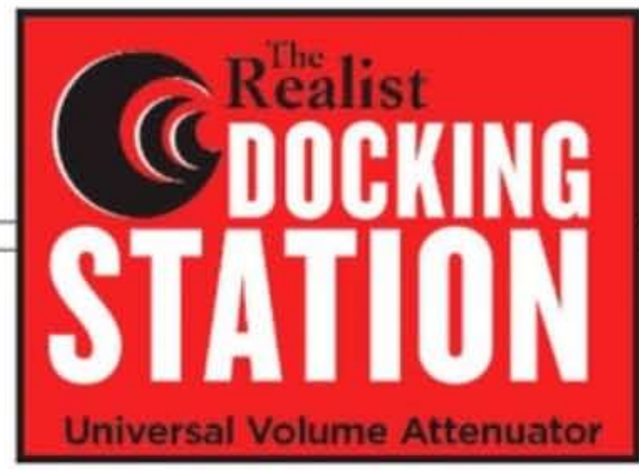
You flip Ivan Lins' Brazilian standard "Septembro" in an interesting way.

[Keyboardist] Federico Peña and I started playing that on the Tutu tour, and I thought, let's record it, but with an Afro-Cuban slant, using Dizzy Gillespie's "Manteca" bass line. We brought in Rubén Blades on vocals, who was amazing and told some great stories between takes, and Gretchen Parlato, who sings so beautifully—rhythmic and breathy at the same time. I found a wonderful old French upright at [L.A. music shop] Stein on Vine that had a great sound for the "Manteca" vamp section, and toward the end of the track I thought it would be cool to use it to trade riffs with my fretless bass.

Your version of "Mr. Clean" perfectly suits the sound of your young band.

There's definitely a musical and spiritual connection, because while most people know Freddie Hubbard's version [*Straight Life*, CTI, 1971], for me this is the signature song written by one of my key musical mentors in Jamaica, Queens: the late Weldon Irvine. He would put together gigs for kids like Omar Hakim, Bernard Wright, and me, and he'd tape them and make us listen back, in his Chevy Nova. He'd say, "Why did you change up right there?" And I'd say, "I guess I was bored." And he'd say, "Well, you screwed up the whole song because you're young and don't have the attention span to hold the groove!" Of course, my band is much more musically mature, but I try to take on the same guiding role. We were playing this song on the road last year and we had a day off, so we went to a rehearsal studio and worked it up. In the middle, we just stop and go to a new key and feel, but then we turn on a dime back to the original.

There's an appealing simplicity to your solo take on the Jackson 5's "I'll Be There."



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I was doing a bass clinic in France shortly after Michael Jackson died, and I played this version on the spot. It's just the bass line and the melody, with hardly any chords, which represents how I heard it as a kid: just Michael's voice and the bass. My assistant reminded me about it, and I thought it would be a good way to end the CD. I used a Boss Loop Station to create the looped changes I blow over at the end. We have video footage of me recording it, which I'm going to put on my website.

What inspired your bass clarinet/upright/fretless feature "Gorée"?

We did a gig in Senegal, and we visited the island of Gorée, just off the coast of Dakar, which is where they kept slaves like cattle in these little houses for three months, to make sure they were fit before shipping them to North America. I wrote the song about the feeling of walking through one of the houses, as the tour guide described daily life there. It was emotional thinking about the horrible conditions and what lay ahead for them overseas, but there's also a positive side that reflects my being an African American who is able to return and share my music with Africans so we can all continue to grow and build together, culturally. I used bass clarinet because of the somber, inherent sadness of its tone, and I recorded the track on fretless, but then I went back and overdubbed the first half on upright when I realized that's the sound I was emulating on fretless.

The song's B section represents the hope. Really, the whole CD is about a new beginning. I see it happening all over the world in my travels; everyone is turning the page, starting to look at things a little differently, thanks in large part to the social media revolution. We're on the edge of an exciting period, and I want my music to reflect and inspire that.

What can you reveal about your upcoming Sirius XM Radio show, and what else lies ahead?

I was among the guest hosts for tributes to Miles, Herbie Hancock, and Luther Vandross, and the Sirius folks said it was time to do my own show. They have a straightahead jazz channel and a smooth channel, so I want to fill the gaps with the music that falls in between. I also want to do interviews and have some shows on the history of the bass. Aside from that, the rest of this year we'll be touring the U.S. and abroad in support of *Renaissance*, and I'm going to do another Miles tribute run with Herbie and Wayne. Looking ahead, I'm thinking about doing a concept album under a project name, utilizing guest vocalists—yet another new direction. **BP**

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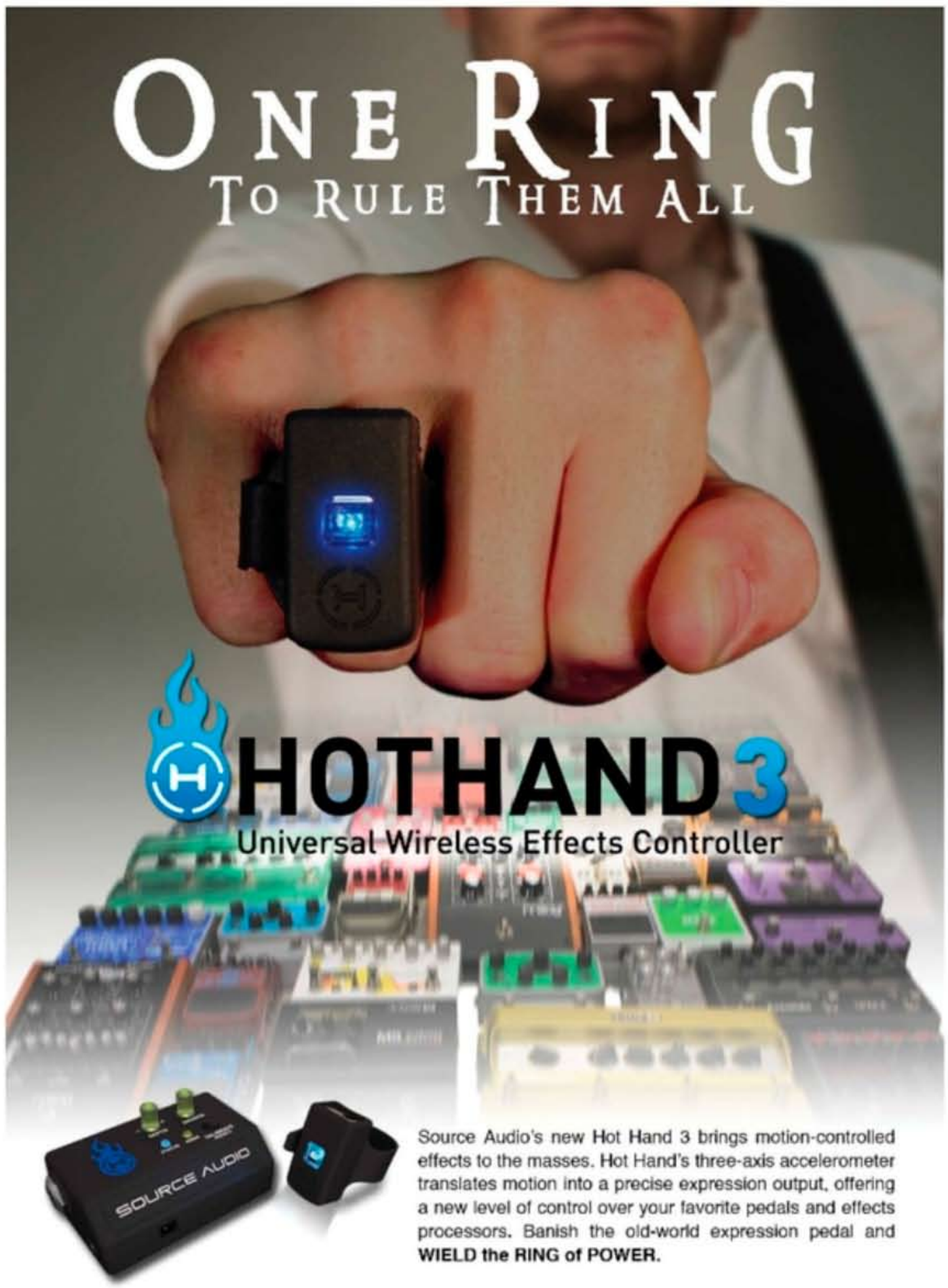

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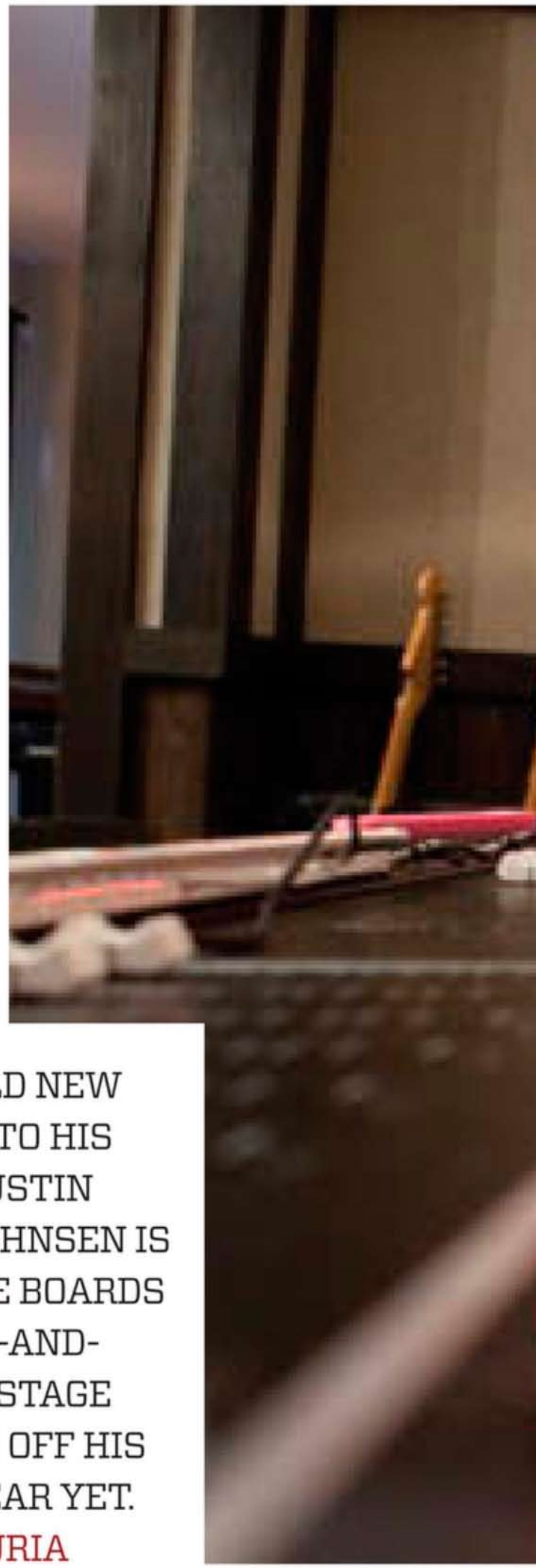

Whether it's his lifelong collaboration with Beck, his command of the daunting Nine Inch Nails bass chair, or his ever-expanding collection of rare instruments, Justin Meldal-Johnsen has always been on the cutting edge of what's hip. He's done sessions for everyone from the Mars Volta to Dixie Chicks to Black Eyed Peas to Pink to Macy Gray, and as a producer, he has worked with a diverse list of acts that includes Paramore, Tegan And Sara, M83, and Neon Trees. In an age of categories and stereotypes, Meldal-Johnsen's wide-open ears and deep skills allow him to be a musical chameleon who's always juggling a juicy workload—who else would be tracking bass on Garbage's new *Not Your Kind of People*, Jason Mraz's *Love Is a Four-Letter Word*, and the next Beck record, all at the same time?

But lately, the man known for frenetic yet precise showmanship and blistering melodic lines seems to be showing a strong air of maturity. He still rocks a mean key-bass and can shred as much as ever, but these days, the 42-year-old Meldal-Johnsen is savoring the space between notes and thinking twice about those boisterous fills. In other words, JMJ is on the top of his game in a whole new way, and he's bringing a new definition of hip.

You've been very busy lately. What's currently on your plate?

I just finished doing bass and production for the Tegan And Sara record; now I'm getting started on the new Paramore record that I'm producing. After that, I'm back to work with Beck touring and recording. It's a very exciting and busy year.

What can we expect from the bass on Beck's new album?

This record is all about the bass' sound character linking up with the snare and the kick that conveys the feeling of the song. A lot of times he'll takes bits of my improvisation and make bass lines out of them. But when I say "Beck record," there are big quotation marks around that, because

ALEXANDRA ELLA

WITH A BOLD NEW APPROACH TO HIS PLAYING, JUSTIN MELDAL-JOHNSEN IS BEHIND THE BOARDS AND FRONT-AND-CENTER ONSTAGE AS HE CAPS OFF HIS BUSIEST YEAR YET.

BY JON D'AURIA

INFO

LISTEN

Garbage, *Not Your Kind of People* [Stunvolume, 2012]; Jason Mraz, *Love Is a Four Letter Word* [Atlantic, 2012]; M83, *Hurry Up, We're Dreaming* [Naive, 2011]

EQUIP

Basses 1966 & 1975 Fender Precision Basses, 1976 Gibson Ripper, 1980 Gibson RD Artist, 1966 Guild Starfire, Guild Starfire reissue, 1967 Fender Mustang, 1964 Höfner President, 1965 Höfner Very Thin, Gibson Thunderbird, Ibanez Musician, Aria SP1000, Harmony H22, Rickenbacker 4003, EKO Hollowbody, Steinberger XL2, Roland G707, Ovation Magnum II, Schecter 8-string Hellcat Bass
Rig 1970s Ampeg B-15N, Ampeg Reissue B-15R, Aguilar DB 751, Aguilar DB 412 & DB 810, Aguilar DB 115 & DB 112, Mesa Boogie 1x15
Effects Tronographic Rusty Box, Aguilar TLC Compressor, Guyatone Delay and PS2 Phaser, Line 6 M9 multi-effect, MXR M-80 Bass DI+, various Pigtronix effects, TC Electronic Corona Chorus, TC Electronic FlashBack Delay, EBS MultiDrive, EBS ValveDrive, Boss OC2 Octave, Ibanez Harmonic Delay, Electro-Harmonix Bassballs, all Moogerfooger pedals, Montreal Assembly pedals
Synths Korg MS-20, Access Virus TI2, Moog Mini tour

there's probably enough material for four very different records. I don't think Beck has revealed this yet, but I will tell you that we have performed on what seems to be more than one Beck album to come.

What is it like working with Beck after all these years?

I know what he wants and that's gotten easier, but it's still a difficult process. It's never easy, because Beck has very few restrictions to his music, and he just doesn't operate in a small box. Because of that, it keeps you on your toes. The other thing is that he works really fast. He has no interest in you doing take after take. Working with Beck is never resting on my laurels, for two reasons: his expectations, and the caliber of musicians in the room with him. That's a fun thing to dive into, but I never go into it thinking I'm going to have a casual day.

How has producing changed your mentality as a bassist?

I think it ultimately makes me play simpler on bass, because as a producer, I'm always trying to find and create space within the music. Especially when you get artists like Neon Trees or Paramore, they want the type of feel I get with M83 that's very cinematic, multi-layered, thick, production-heavy tracks with a lot of programming on it. So that transcends the bass playing, because with all of that, I still have to make room for the bass guitar. Sometimes when I look back at my work over the years, I feel that I played things too busy. I don't regret anything I've done, but there are certain places where I realize I probably didn't need to do that fill on the second chorus also. Maybe now it's just maturing my bass playing a little and making me value the silence between the notes.

What's your ideal way to track bass?

I find myself needing one of my B-15s and a DI handy, and I want to use minimal compression and minimal EQ. I want the EQ to come from my hands and from the amp. But when I'm producing, I'm trying more to innovate and find some other angles for the idea of bass. I always love coupling synth bass and live bass at the same time, and I actually do that on almost everything. Because of that, sometimes I want the bass to have a stringier and almost guitar-like sound that cuts through. To achieve that I've been re-amping through guitar amps or using just a DI and taking the bass and bypassing it so that there's not a lot of serious low end; that way it becomes more of a harmonic instrument.

How does your approach change from recording with a band to touring with one?

With the exception of NIN, when I tour I feel that I have to be allowed to be myself. It's a tall order and can be hard on the artists sometimes, because you're supposed to be a sideman and cater to the artist, blah, blah, blah. But when I perform, I like to let loose and have a good time, freak out, show off, and explore the bass. NIN was an exception because the nature of that band and the

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economy of the bass parts. I couldn't necessarily be a ham because it was more about folding yourself into this really powerful whole.

What did you take away from your time with NIN?

Discipline, patience, the nuances of working with someone who knows exactly what he wants, and figuring out how to operate in those parameters. I also learned a lot about stamina and how to pace myself through really long shows. It was physically demanding material, and I found it very helpful because it added new dimensions to my playing and made me more focused.

Tell us about your playing techniques and how you achieve your tone.

I always keep a pick in between my right-hand pinkie and ring finger, and I came up with a way to flip it into my hand so it's always there for use. I roll it between my thumb and index finger. I do it all the time with Beck, where I'll play the verse with my fingers and the chorus with a pick. I don't know how that came about, but it was subconscious and I literally discovered that I was doing it. All of a sudden there's a pick in my hand, and for a while I wouldn't recall how it got there. Otherwise, I like to roll off the volume knob and play close to the neck sometimes. I'm good at tap dancing on multiple pedals, and I like quick changes in music. I like very fast picking, which works well mirroring synth bass on tracks.

How do you make your playing so authentic in such a wide range of genres?

I'm really good at replicating things, but I always have to ask myself, How much am I imitating and how much am I expressing my own voice? It makes me concerned. Sometimes I'm worried that I'm working too hard putting something together that sounds like something else. Mostly, I'm just trying to make a song sound good, so I don't know it if I'm doing it. Playing one style or being known for one thing is an antiquated concept in my opinion. For me, I want to look at the biggest picture possible as I create a bass line.

What's your best advice for tracking bass in the studio?

Play lightly. I keep learning this over and over again, but the best bass sounds in the world come from bass players who don't choke the life out of their instrument. And here's a weird one that I have to tell you: Don't grip your bass too tightly. Don't have it too close to your body, don't grab too hard with your left hand, and don't press it too hard with your right forearm. I've learned that a lot of the tone gets stifled when the bass isn't allowed to vibrate because of the player's body. Also, be obsessive about tuning. You should always be in tune; so many players don't keep on that because of laziness. Pitch and rhythm are the two biggest components of bass. Know the weakness of your instrument and never force anything. **BP**

THE

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Lianna Davies
PETTYBONE

Mark Saunders
FLORENCE AND THE MACHINE

Pete Griffin
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SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE BAND

Branden Campbell
NEON TREES

Eric Halborg
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SOUNDROOM

Fender
Select Precision & Jazz Basses

BY BRIAN FOX

IT'S AN ADAGE YOU HEAR TIME AND AGAIN—LEO GOT IT right the first time. Truly, when Leo Fender's Precision Bass hit the market in 1951, the bar for the electric bass—then a brand-new instrument—was set pretty dang high. Subsequent design tweaks, including the shift to the split pickup configuration in 1957 and the option of a rosewood fingerboard in 1959, clinched the iconic instrument's status as the gold standard for electric bass. Fender's 1960 follow-up home run

in the Jazz Bass makes it easy to understand how the nascent instrument—before such new-fangled developments as active electronics, 5-strings, 6-strings, 11-strings, etc.—was once known ubiquitously as the Fender Bass.

A lot has changed since those dinosaur days of slab bodies, clay position markers, and "backwards" tuners. But one thing remains: the mighty Precision and venerated Jazz are still kings of the castle in the Land of Down Low. Of course, there are legitimate claims to the throne coming from all sides. But bring a burly P or a sweet J to just about any gig/session/rehearsal/hootenanny, and you're sure to get the nod of approval from those in the know.

It was once a small cottage industry to take the basic design of a Precision—and especially that of a Jazz—and supercharge it using fancy woods, hi-tech electronics, and a price tag that would make most working stiffs blanch. Now it's big business. With a few exceptions, Fender has seemed a little reluctant to move into that luxury market, choosing instead to continue to cook up Leo's tried-and-true original recipe while branching out mostly with budget-minded takes on P- and J-Basses. With its new Select Precision and Jazz Basses, Fender is

SPECIFICATIONS

FENDER

Fender Select Precision Bass
Street $2,300
Bottom Line A superior specimen of the bass that started it all.

Fender Select Jazz Bass
Street $2,300
Bottom Line In a market cluttered with fancy-pants clones, Fender sticks to its game plan and knocks it out of the park.

Contact fender.com

SELECT PRECISION BASS

Body Alder
Top Flame maple
Neck Quartersawn maple
Fingerboard Maple
Width at nut 1.625"
Radius Compound (9.5"–14")
Pickup Fender Select Precision split-coil
Finish Gloss-lacquer 2-tone sunburst
Weight 8.8 lbs
Hardshell case Included
Made in U.S.A.

SELECT JAZZ BASS

Body Alder
Top Flame maple
Neck Quartersawn maple
Fingerboard Rosewood
Width at nut 1.5"
Radius Compound (9.5"–14")
Pickups Fender Select Jazz
Finish Gloss-lacquer Amber Burst
Weight 9.4 lbs
Hardshell case Included
Made in U.S.A.

throwing a bone to P and J lovers looking for something a little special.

SWEET P

First, a confession: I have a hard time finding P-style instruments that speak to me. Turns out I'm more or less a Jazz guy (though definitely not in the "Giant Steps" sense of the word), partial to thin neck profiles and the scooped sound I've come to associate with Jazz Basses. In the Select Precision, I just might have found a soul mate. Everything about the Select P rubbed me the right way, from its impeccable hand-polished sunburst finish (on a luxurious flame maple top, no less) to its comfortable satin-finish neck. I tend to be persnickety about the tone pot on P-Basses—after all, that's pretty much the only tone control you get on this relatively Spartan instrument—and the smooth taper of the Select P's pot afforded every nuance I could want in a Precision, from dark, rich, and buttery to zingy and aggressive. To be sure, I've had pleasant experiences playing a variety of modern-day Precisions, but in terms of playability and tone, the Select felt and sounded and a cut above.

Stuart Hamm
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"With the JDX, I get consistent, coherent tone night after night and the guitarists love the sound in their in-ears. It simply rocks!"

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"The JDX is almost too good to be true. The artists hear the sound they are playing and I'm not fighting mic coloration. Plug it in & turn it up."

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~ Danny Miranda
Bassist - Queen, Blue Oyster Cult, Meat Loaf.

"The Radial JDX captures the distortion from the bass amp without any loss of low end. And with such a loud band, it also helps eliminate spill."

~ Jon Burton
FOH - The Prodigy.

"Folks don't realize how hard it is to make multiple guitar channels live happily together. With a JDX, mic placement is no longer an issue."

~ Bradley Johnson
FOH - Aerosmith, Whitesnake.

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~ Jim Warren
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FOH - Chickenfoot.

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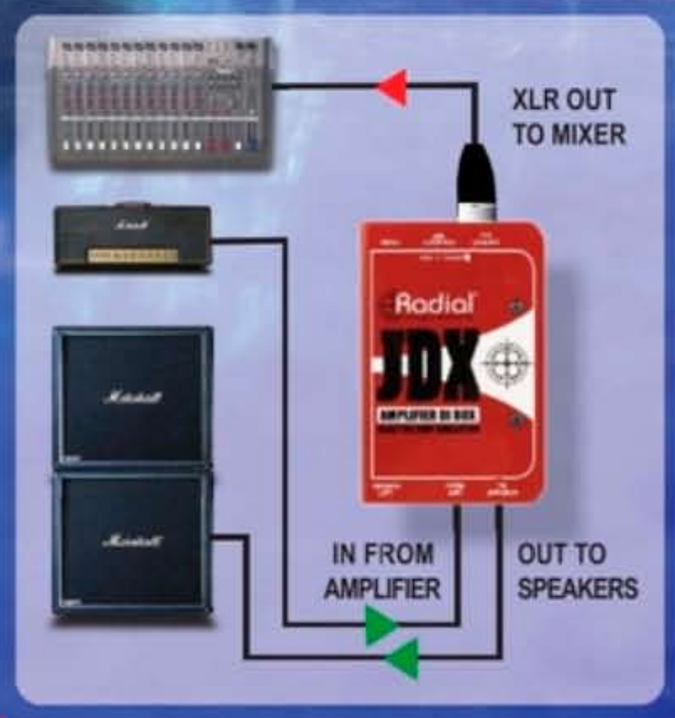

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NEW J WAY

Chalk it up to the novelty of a the Select Precision—and the allure of all the other sexy basses that pass through our office—but it actually took a little time to warm up to the Select Jazz Bass. A J-Bass with a fancy maple top? Been there, done that. Passive electronics, in these "Super-J" times? Yawn. And yet, the beauty of the Select Jazz is that it is actually downright old-school by design, a throw-back to the days of old. The Select Jazz features many of the same high-class accouterment as the Select Precision: hand-rubbed finish on a maple top, an alder body, and a quartersawn maple neck. For the fingerboard, Fender opted for rosewood with block bindings—a nod to the coveted '70s-era Jazz Basses.

Once I got over my misguided expectations of the Select Jazz, I got it; the bass doesn't have the bells and whistles often found on so many upscale Jazz clones, but what it does have is abundant evidence of master craftsmanship and attention to detail, and solid proof that Leo did get it right the first time (actually the second time, but who's counting?). If you're looking for an ultra-snappy, super-charged J-Bass active electronics, there are lots of options out there. If you're looking for a top-notch Jazz—perhaps the best that Fender has to offer, check out the Select Jazz.

When Fender re-vamped its American Standard series of Basses in 2008, we dug where they were going: back to basics. With the Select Precision and Jazz, Fender is taking that tradition to the next level with a limited number of instruments. Certainly, you can get the job done just as well with Fender's less expensive models. But a touch of class goes a long way; and if you're looking for that extra-special J or P, you owe it to yourself to check out Fender's Select series. **BP**

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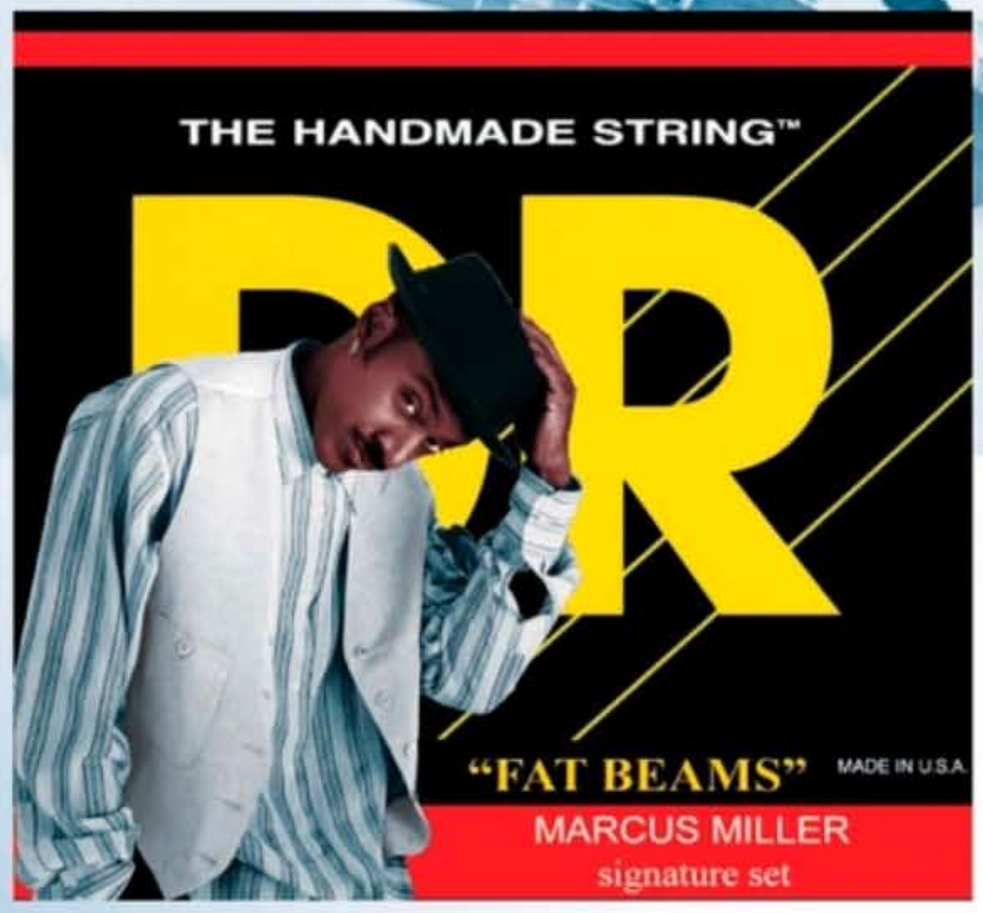


DRstrings.com

Peavey
Tour TNT 115, Headliner & Headliner 410

BY BRIAN FOX

WHETHER YOU'RE A BRAND-SPANKING NEWBIE or a grizzled gig vet, Peavey's got your back. From its pint-sized combos to its all-tube monster heads, the Mississippi-based brand has pretty much every base covered in the amp department. We've been hip to Peavey's trip for years, from its workhorse heads and combos in the '80s and '90s to its contemporary offerings incorporating the latest developments in circuitry and construction. This month, we take a closer look at a sampling of its Tour series: the TNT 115 combo, Headliner head, and Headliner 410 cabinet.

COMBO NATION

The appeal of a combo amp is pretty universal—with fewer pieces to haul and less cable to tangle with, it's less fuss and more rock. While some of Peavey's lesser-powered combos are best suited to practice and low-volume rehearsals, the flagship TNT 115 is a robust rig that packs sufficient power to shake larger stages.

Housed in a tank-like enclosure that features a cutaway for tilt-back monitoring, the TNT pumps 300 watts into its internal 15" speaker. Aside from the typical PRE GAIN and MASTER VOLUME knobs, the combo's control panel sports an array of EQ controls; for those who are intimidated by graphic EQs (come on, y'all—it's not rocket science), there are a variety of dead simple EQ controls, from LOW and HIGH shelving knobs to CONTOUR button that scoops midrange frequencies, a BRIGHT switch which boosts highs, and even a CRUNCH circuit that's designed to emulate natural tube distortion. The combo also features onboard compression and Peavey's DDT (Distortion Detection Technique) circuit, which protects the power amp from clipping.

On a bar gig without sound reinforcement, the TNT kept up without a problem, and I never felt as if I was wanting for volume. Leaving the amp's settings flat for the most part—though I did kick in the CONTOUR control for a quick-and-easy scooped sound—the TNT sounded clean and loud, with big, airy bottom and ample top end courtesy of its HF tweeter. My only gripes with the TNT related to ergonomics. At 75 pounds, the combo is pretty heavy, and I found its side mounted handles made the unit tough to schlep solo. Also, the controls were easy to access when the amp was upright, but when I tipped it back for monitoring purposes, the controls were hard to reach. Still, there's a reason the TNT has been around for so dang long—it's a beefy-sounding, full-featured combo that offers a great value. With modern updates like DDT protection and lightweight Class D power amps, the TNT is certain to stay a while.

SPECIFICATIONS

PEAVEY

TNT 115
Street $550
Bottom Line The latest updates to Peavey's iconic workhorse combo make it an excellent choice for players looking for a stand-alone gig rig.

Headliner
Street $350
Bottom Line With all the features of the TNT in head form, the Headliner is a powerful, versatile amp that sounds great atop nearly any cabinet.

Headliner 410
Street $300
Bottom Line Peavey's commitment to offering high-quality gear at prices we all can afford is exemplified by the Headliner 410, a solid cab at a killer price.

Contact peavey.com

SPECIFICATIONS

TNT 115
Power rating 300 watts @ 4Ω
Speakers Peavey 15" with tweeter
Controls PRE GAIN, BRIGHT (+10dB @ 1kHz), CONTOUR, CRUNCH, LOW (315dB, 50Hz–100Hz), 7-band graphic EQ (315 dB @ 40Hz, 100Hz, 200Hz, 400Hz, 800Hz, 1.6kHz, and3.2kHz), HIGH (315dB @ 5kHz–8kHz), COMPRESSOR, MASTER VOLUME, DDT limiter
Weight 75 lbs
Made in China

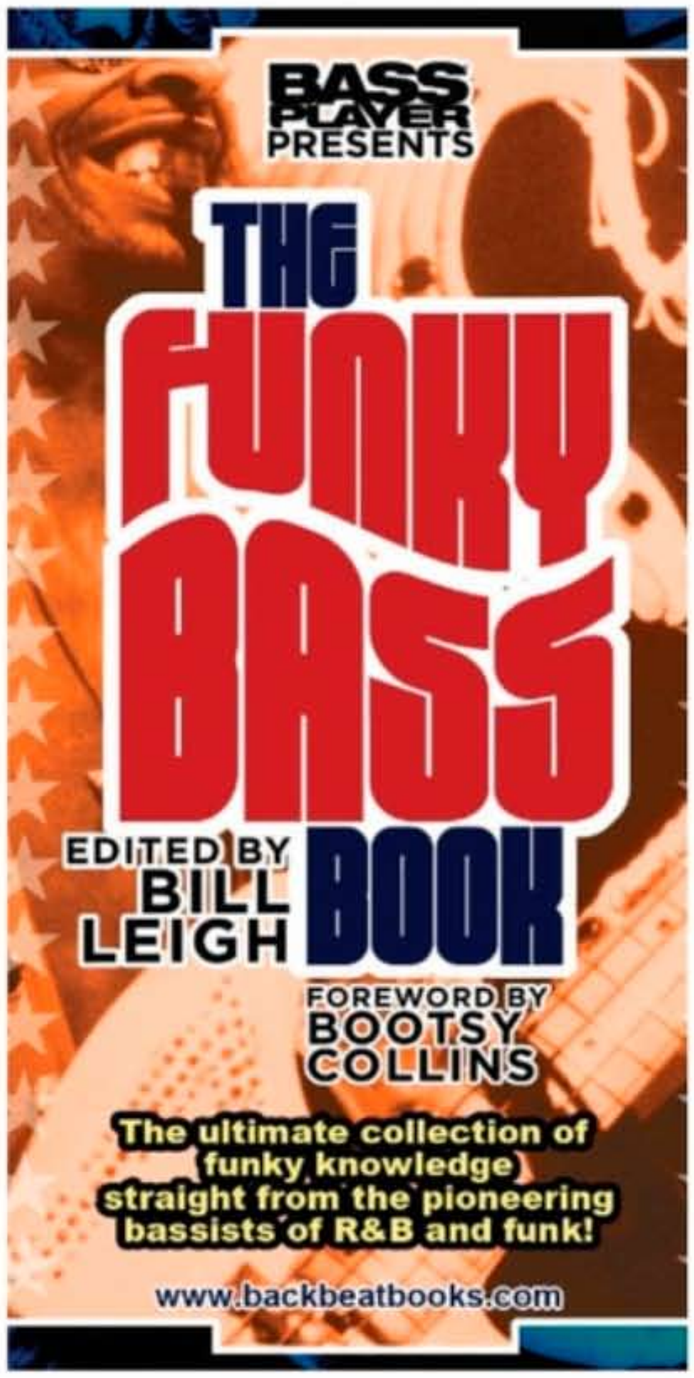
HEADLINER
Power rating 300 watts @ 4Ω
Controls PRE-GAIN, BRIGHT, CONTOUR, CRUNCH, LOW, 7-band EQ (315 dB @ 40Hz, 100Hz, 200Hz, 400Hz, 800Hz, 1.6kHz, 3.2kHz) HIGH, COMPRESSOR, VOLUME, DDT limiter
Back panel jacks One twist-lock, one ¼" speaker out, ¼" send and return, XLR DI out
Made in China

HEADLINER 410
Power handling 800 watts
Impedance 8Ω
Speakers Four Peavey 10" drivers
Cabinet covering Black carpet
Jacks One twist-lock, two ¼"
Weight 72 lbs
Made in China

HEADLINING

The Headliner essentially takes the guts of the TNT and packs it in a rack-mountable head, allowing greater flexibility in terms of cabinet accompaniment. With identical controls, the Headliner behaved much like the TNT. But paired with Peavey's Headliner 410 cab, the Headliner sounded a hair more defined and articulate, and its CRUNCH and CONTOUR settings seemed bigger and rounder.

For its part, the Headliner 410 cab is a testament to Peavey's knack for putting out high-quality gear at a sweet price point; The 410 could easily stand up alongside 4x10 cabinets that cost more than twice as much. With a combined price around $650, the Headliner and Headliner 410 hit the mark for any player looking for a versatile, powerful, modular rig. **BP**



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Wireless Systems 101

BY E.E. BRADMAN

IN A WORLD WHERE REMOTE CONTROLS, PHONES, Internet connections, computer keyboards, mice, and headphones are wireless, it's surprising to learn that wireless technology is barely 70 years old. Several companies were involved in pioneering wireless technology in the 1940s, but it wasn't until the '70s that rock stars such as the Rolling Stones and Todd Rundgren began using wireless mics. Instrumental wireless technology came shortly thereafter, freeing fiery bassists like Verdine White from being earthbound, and the technology has improved by leaps and bounds since the days when air-traffic control tower chatter or radio transmissions from passing taxicabs could interrupt bass solos.

Most modern wireless systems consist of a transmitter, which sends out the signals output by your bass, and a receiver, which picks up the radio signal broadcast by the transmitter and changes it back into an audio signal. (Your bass is the "input device.") Transmitters usually come in the form of a bodypack that clips onto your belt or bass strap, and receivers, many of them half-rack size, can be installed into or on top of your amp. Receivers have gotten smaller over time; unlike older single-antenna receivers, most systems today use "true diversity" setups, which combine two independent receiver sections, each with its own antenna to pick up the transmission from a transmitter.

THE SPIRIT OF RADIO

Wireless systems operate in VHF (Very High Frequency, 25MHz–216MHz), UHF (Ultra High Frequency, 450MHz–955MHz), and 2.4GHz frequency bands. The highest VHF frequencies, 169MHz–216MHz, are the most popular (and most crowded); systems in this frequency band are affordable and reliable. Back in the day, wireless systems built to use the UHF band were more expensive—there was very little interference, and many systems could operate simultaneously without interfering with each other. Now that there are UHF systems in almost every price bracket, however, things are a little more congested, which is why the Federal Communications Commission approved the 2.4GHz band for wireless use. Line 6 is one company whose wireless systems use this band to avoid interference from high-powered systems such as digital TV or analog wireless systems.

Using a wireless unit is all about finding clear channels on the right frequency, so if you're in the market, you will encounter features such as **automatic frequency selection**, which locates a clear channel instantly; **frequency carrier range**, which tells you which frequencies the unit operates on; **frequency response**, which dictates the high and low frequencies the unit can handle; and **interface lock**, which locks the settings on your bodypack so you can't change them on purpose or by accident. Most units offer a number of **preprogrammed frequencies** per group, too.

Besides these technical considerations, most bass players look for wireless units that are roadworthy, not too battery-hungry, and not too expensive. The most common concern, however, is bad tone. One widespread technology used in analog wireless systems is **compansion** (or "companding"), which allows signals with a large dynamic range to be transmitted over radio waves, which have a smaller dynamic range capability. (The word is a portmanteau of "compression" and "expansion.") Companding also reduces the noise and crosstalk levels at the receiver, but some players complain that it sounds brittle and choppy, especially on acoustic instruments. Fortunately, compansion on modern instruments can be gentle, and because it's a requirement of analog systems, digital wireless units like Line 6's Relay series don't use it all.

Another frequently asked question is whether units built for guitar—unfortunately, most of them—work well for bass. If you're a 5-string player, look for receivers that can handle frequencies down to 32Hz, the open *B* of a 5-string.

7 WIRELESS SYSTEMS UNDER $300

If you're in the market, the sky's the limit, but for those of us on a budget, here's our list of wireless units under $300. Visit forums, ask friends and live sound engineers, and when you can, try before you buy. Happy flying!

AKG WMS 450 GUITAR SET
Street $299
Companding Yes
Frequency response 35Hz–20kHz
Frequency bands 650MHz–865MHz
Pre-programmed frequencies per group 12
Range N/A
Batteries One AA

AUDIO-TECHNICA ATW2110 UNIPAK
Street $299
Companding Yes
Frequency response 100Hz–15kHz
Frequency bands Either 840MHz–865MHz (F Band) or 795MHz–820MHz (E Band)
Pre-programmed frequencies per group 10
Range 300 feet
Batteries Two AA
Other Also check out the $99 ATW-251G (80Hz–3kHz, with 200-ft. range) and the $249 ATW-701 (100Hz–12kHz, with 200-ft. range).

SAMSON AIRLINE 77 GUITAR SYSTEM
Street $249
Types Compact, pedal size; AF1 made for Fender-style top-body inputs and AG1 for end-mount inputs and others
Companding Yes
Frequency response 50Hz–15kHz
Frequency bands 801MHz–805MHz
Pre-programmed frequencies per group 6
Range 328 feet
Batteries One 9-volt

ONBOARD RESEARCH INTELLITOUCH FREEDOM ONE #WT1
Street $149
Companding No
Frequency response 10Hz–20kHz
Frequency carrier range 2.4GHz
Pre-programmed frequencies per group 18 auto-selected
Range 30 feet
Batteries One AAA
Other The Freedom One's ten-hour battery life, 24-bit clarity, and automatic channel selection make it easy to get into wireless. The receiver is a pedal tuner, so it is easy to fit on your pedalboard.

NADY U-33B
Street $179
Companding Yes
Frequency response 30Hz–8kHz (–3dB)
Operating range 250 feet (up to twice as much with optimum line of sight)
Frequency bands 470MHz–510MHz
Pre-programmed frequencies per group N/A
Range 100 feet
Batteries Three AAA
Other Check out Nady's older DKW3GT ($49.95), DKW1GT ($59.99), and Encore II ($90) systems

LINE 6 RELAY G30
Street $299
Companding No
Frequency response 10Hz–20kHz
Frequency carrier range 2.4GHz
Pre-programmed frequencies per group 6
Range 100 feet
Batteries Two AA
Other The G30's Cable Tone Simulator matches the frequency response of your cable, making it easier to switch between wireless and cable without changing amp settings.

SHURE PG14 PERFORMANCE GEAR WIRELESS GUITAR SYSTEM
Street $299
Companding Yes
Frequency response 45Hz–15kHz
Frequency carrier range 2.4GHz
Pre-programmed frequencies per group 10
Range 30 feet
Batteries One 9-volt

JAZZ CONCEPTS

"The Lick," Part 2

BY JOHN GOLDSBY

LAST MONTH WE LOOKED AT A COMMON LICK, APPROPRIATELY CALLED "The Lick," that has been making the rounds in jazz solos for decades and has recently become an online phenomenon. Why do we need licks and patterns when we improvise? Licks are always part of our musical vocabulary, whether we admit it or not. Some musicians say licks should be avoided and we should always create new melodies and bass lines in real time. That's impossible, though! We need licks we can play all over the bass and to fit every musical situation we encounter. Licks, and their close relatives—scales, arpeggios, and patterns—are building blocks of our musical vocabulary.

This month, let's look at a two-chorus solo, packed with licks, over the harmonic progression to the jazz standard "Solar." This jam-session favorite is played worldwide by students and pros alike because of its short 12-bar form, the comfortably open *C* minor sound in the first three bars, and subsequent harmonic movement through several IIm–V–I progressions.

Note the following:

Bars 1–2 The opening solo statement outlines the sound of *C* minor with the note *B*, which is a major 7th (a *Cmmaj7* chord). The typical *Cm7* chord would contain the note *B♭* (the flatted 7th) rather than *B*, but in this chord progression we use *Cmmaj7*.

Bar 3 Check out the lick on beats *three* and *four*. We'll see this pattern in several spots in the solo. Here the lick uses the 9th, root, 5th, and 3rd of the *Cm* chord (the notes *D*, *C*, *G*, *E♭*).

Bar 4 "The Lick" from last month's column makes a guest appearance!

Bars 5–6 This phrase emphasizes the 9th (*G*) and 7th (*E*) of the *Fmaj7* chord.

Bars 7–8 Although the *Fm7* to *B♭7* is a IIm–V progression in the key of *E♭* major, this lick starts on a low *B♭* and moves up the *B♭* Mixolydian scale. The note *G♭* is the only chromatic tone outside of the *B♭* Mixolydian scale.

Bars 9–10 This line also begins on the low *B♭*, which is the 5th of the *E♭maj7* chord. The note *G* in bar 9 changes to the *G♭* on beat *one* of bar 10. This precisely outlines the change from *E♭maj7*(the 3rd is *G*) to *E♭m7* (the 3rd is *G♭*).

Bar 11 Mirroring the lick in bar 9, the line here starts on a low *A♭*, the 5th of the *D♭maj7*. On beats *three* and *four*, we see a common bebop pattern: the root, 2nd, 3rd, 5th (*D♭*, *E♭*, *F*, *A♭*) of the *D♭maj7* chord.

Bar 12 This is one of my favorite licks over a minor IIm–V progression, such as *Dm7♭5* to *G7♭9♭13* in this case. (Some of the chords are abbreviated in the notation.) The ♭5 of the *Dm7♭5* (the note *A♭*) and the ♭13 of the *G7♭9♭13* chord (the note *E♭*) are emphasized.

INFO

JOHN GOLDSBY

Discuss all aspects of bass playing with John at the musicplayer.com Low-Down Forum. Also visit John's website for sound files, videos, and bass-related material. **johngoldsby.com**

CONNECT

- Download the Jamey Aebersold *Jazz Handbook*, free! It's full of patterns, licks, and theory. **bassplayer.com/november2012**

Bars 13–14 The solo's second chorus begins with a short statement on the *Cmmaj7*. The *A* in bar 14 has a hip sound—it is the 6th scale degree of a *C* ascending melodic minor scale, which sounds good over the *Cmmaj7*.

Bar 15 This is the same lick that we hear in bar 3! Using a lick several times in a solo can sound hip. Overusing a lick sounds boring.

Bar 16 The lick over the *Cm* chord in bar 15 is moved up one half-step to outline notes in the *C7♭9♯9* chord: *E♭* (♯9), *D♭* (♭9), *A♭* (♭13), *E* (3rd), *E♭* (♯9), *D♭* (♭9).

Bars 17–18 This is a simple inversion of an *F* major triad: *C*, *A*, *F*.

Bar 20 Here is the same lick found in bar 16, this time used over the *B♭7♭9♯9* chord.

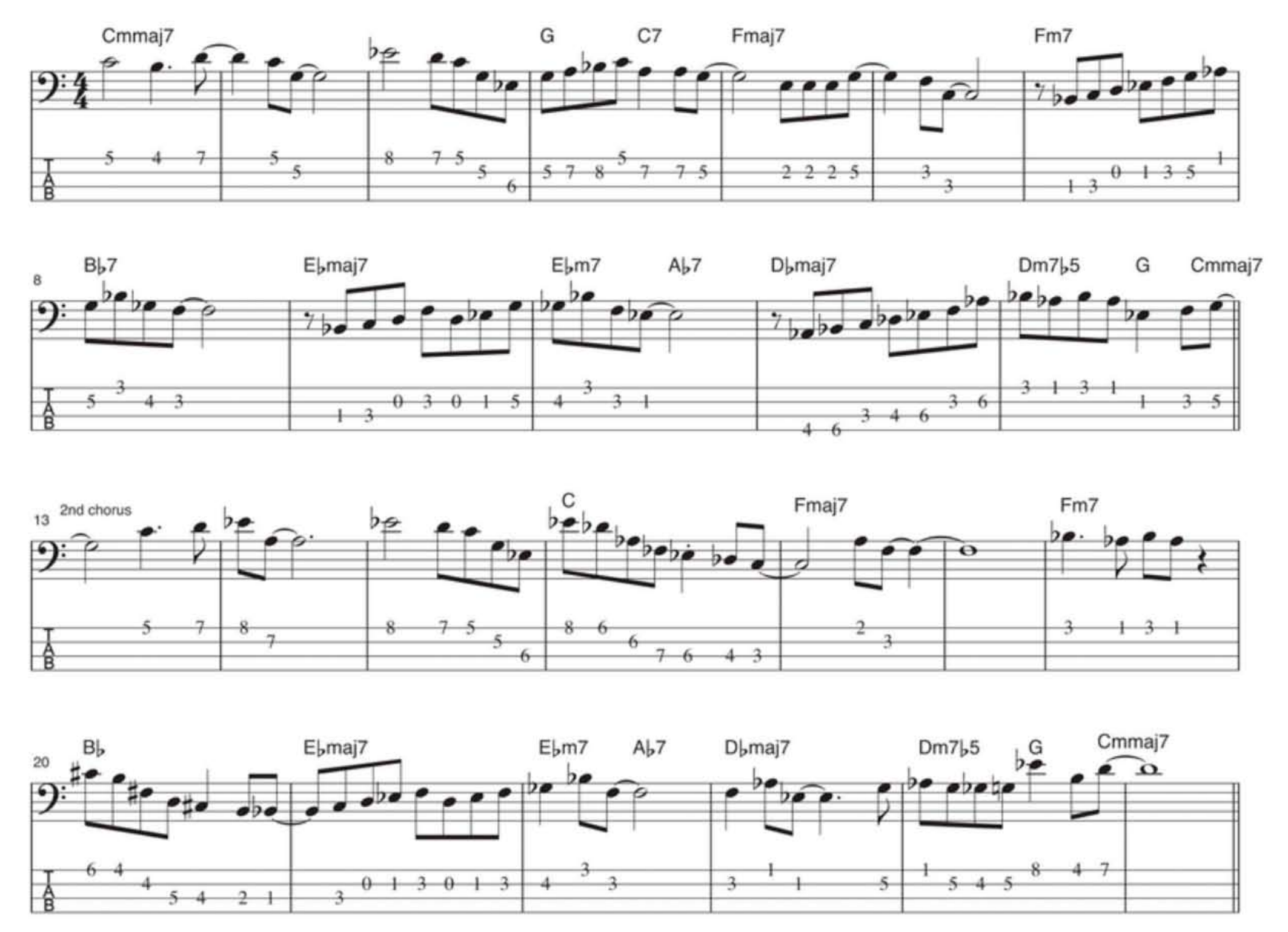
Bar 21 Compare this pattern over the *E♭maj7* to bar 9.

Bars 22–23 Here is a melodic sequence with the notes changing to fit the chords.

Bar 24 Trumpeter Dizzy Gillespie made this lick famous back in the '40s. It's still a slick way to end a solo, even for bass players!

Miles Davis claimed to have written "Solar," and he even copyrighted the tune in 1963. Davis had a penchant for appropriating musical compositions from others, and recent evidence has indicated that the original "Solar" melody and similar harmony were composed and recorded under the title "Sonny" as early as 1946 by guitarist Chuck Wayne. Regardless of who wrote the changes to "Solar" or "Sonny," it's a bop chord progression that sounds great when you just outline the harmony. Take time to analyze the theory behind the tune, and then work out some licks that spell the chord changes.

All great bassists have trademark licks and patterns that define their styles. Which are your favorite jazz licks? Weigh in at the www.musicplayer.com Lowdown Forum! **BP**



BLUES YOU CAN USE

Funkin' It Up

ED FRIEDLAND

INFO

Speaking of funky mofo's, Ed Friedland plays with a number of blues, country, and jazz outfits in and around the Texas Hill Country. **edfriedland.com**

BY ED FRIEDLAND

THIS MONTH I'D LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE one-year anniversary of this column. It's hard to believe it's been a year already—time flies when you're in the groove! For the most part, I've been talking about lines, skills, and attitudes that will serve you well in a traditional blues context. But, while there are many neo-traditionalist bands on the scene trying to recapture the vibe of the classic post-war blues genre, the blues as an art form has not remained frozen in time. Just as the blues has influenced all forms of popular music over the last 50 years, it has also expanded and absorbed elements of other styles, too. One important cross-pollination happened when the blues hooked up with

EX. 1

Swung 16ths ♩ = 86

D7 G7 D7 A7 G7 D7

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PHOTO: NEIL KRUG

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funk. Funk music itself has a direct connection to the melodic motifs, lyrical content, and song forms of the blues, but when blues players started incorporating funk rhythms into their setlists, they discovered a way to reach younger audiences—and pack the dance floor.

The term "funk" can be used to describe everything from James Brown to Chuck Brown, but when you say the F-word to a bass player, what usually comes to mind is thumb slappin' and finger poppin'. While the bright, snappy tone of slap bass is the last thing a "Blues Nazi" wants to hear in the rhythm section, legendary blues artist Albert "The Iceman" Collins toured and recorded for 14 years with bassist Johnny B. Gayden, a funk-slappin' mofo that put his stamp on some of Collins' best work. He also recorded with Johnny Winter, B.B. King, Son Seals, Koko Taylor, Bernard Allison, James Cotton, and Junior Wells. With a resumé like that, it's kind of hard to generalize that slapping has no place in the blues. The key is understanding when to do it.

Example 1 is similar to the line Gayden plays on the track "Put the Shoe on the Other Foot" from Albert Collins' 1991 *Iceman* CD. The tune has a catchy, swinging New Orleans funk vibe, comparable to the Neville Brothers' version of "Hey Pocky Way." It's a half-time swing-funk take on the classic "Bo Diddley groove" that always gets people on their feet. The example is written for 5-string bass, as Gayden—in addition to slapping his way through a blues gig—played it on a 5 (another violation for the "Blues police"). If you don't have a low B string, you can still work this out with your E string detuned a whole-step to D, but the fingering will obviously need adjustment.

If you are not familiar with this feel, give a listen to the aforementioned tracks, as the written rhythms tell you only part of the story. In this groove, the swing 16th-notes have a loose, triplet undercurrent that can't be forced. Like many great groove anchors, this line is based on a repetitive figure that moves through the changes. The pattern is fairly active, but much of the rhythmic drive comes from the use of dead notes—both slapped and popped. The two-bar rhythm stays mostly consistent through the 12-bar blues form, with a slight variation in bar 10, and a cool chromatic walkup for the turnaround figure in bar 12. Experiment with different degrees of "deadness" for the percussive notes. Sometimes it's nice to let some of the actual note's pitch come through.

As Johnny B. has shown us, slapping some funk on your blues gig is perfectly cool. You just need to know when to lay down the fat stuff, and when to grease up the funk machine. Disclaimer: If you show up to a blues gig to find the entire band wearing zoot suits, two-tone shoes, fedoras, and playing through 1950s vintage gear—you may not want to get slap-happy. At least not if you want to get called back! **BP**

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BASSER INSTINCTS

What Are You Paying To Learn?

BY JEFF BERLIN

IN THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE, I ASKED READERS to name any subject that one pays to learn, where *the facts* are not taught first and foremost. Nobody wrote me with any suggestions. This is important to consider. If no such subject exists, then music instruction for pay should fall into the same criteria. It has to, because every other type of instruction for pay does. Here is a question: If you are investing money to learn how to play better and you are not getting musical content or factual music to practice each day, then what you are paying to learn? Write to me with your answers and we can discuss them here.

A fellow named Geoff wrote: "Good day Jeff, glad to see you writing a column for BP. I think there are a number of things you learn where you don't learn the facts first:

1. Riding a bicycle. The facts of how a bicycle works are based on principles of physics.

2. Hitting a baseball. You learn to hit a baseball by trying to hit a baseball, no two ways around it.

3. Learning your first language. Again, trial-and-error. You don't learn about sentence structure, nouns and verbs, subjects and predicates; you learn by copying what you hear around you."

Hi, Geoff. I asked people to name anything that one pays to learn—that is, where one invests money to learn a skill or to improve in one. Bike riding is learned for free, a self-taught experience. Hitting a ball on your own is a free experience as well, except in the major leagues, where batting coaches are *paid* to help batters improve their swing. Finally, learning your first language is a non-paid-for experience as well, a self-taught evolution learned by ear since infancy. Yet all self-taught linguists go to school to learn the facts of their language by learning how to read and write. They are taught by people who are paid to teach factual language information. Let's carry this thought over to music: Self-taught players who learn by ear and choose to pay money to go to schools, events, or to buy DVDs should be taught musical facts to practice. If learning the facts fits every other learn-or-teach-for-pay concept, then music needs to function the same way. If you have other ideas about this, write to me and we can discuss them here. Thanks for your great comments, Geoff.

A reader named Tim asked, "How would you go about developing chops and a sense of groove through a practice routine? What should I be doing in my practice time to make the most of it? Thanks!"

Hi, Tim. Chops need a reason for being developed, or else they are just fingers moving on an instrument. Chops are developed from all the experiences you have as a self-taught player, and also from learning academic music. As self-taught experiences and academic training merge over time, you will become a vastly improved musician, technically improving over time. Groove, meanwhile, is an overrated principle of learning. You do not need a sense of groove when you are practicing; you need to be practicing when you are practicing. As an analogy, drivers "groove" in traffic by driving within the traffic flow. But, new drivers can't "groove" in traffic. They are self-conscious and often drive "out of time," as they are figuring out how to feel the tempo of driving with other cars around them. As they acquire more experience, their driving "groove" becomes more natural. Music is the exact same thing: First you need to learn how to play, and then you will know how to groove. This concept is guaranteed. It worked for every top player on every instrument in music history—but they had to learn how to "drive" first.

If you disagree, please name a top bass player in any style who claims to have learned how to groove via paid lessons or instructional DVDs or online clips that focus on grooving. Send those names to talkingbassnotes@yahoo.com and I will compile a list that we can discuss here.

Finally, to make the most out of your practice routine, make sure you fix mistakes the moment they happen. Count and tap your foot. Stop when you aren't sure what the notes are that you are learning. Practice slowly. Don't perform. And remember to review what you are working on. Thanks for reading. Best from Jeff. **BP**

INFO

JEFF BERLIN

Since establishing himself as a jazz and fusion cornerstone with Bill Bruford, Allan Holdsworth, John McLaughlin, Billy Cobham, and Yes, Jeff Berlin has released eight solo albums and founded the Players School of Music in Clearwater, Florida. He is currently finishing his latest solo recording, as well as a trio CD with Scott Henderson and Dennis Chambers.

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"The Real Me"

John Entwistle's Complete Bass Line

BY BRIAN FOX | PHOTO FROM MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

"TALL, GANGLY, AND UNEMOTIONAL." THAT PARTICULAR DESCRIPTION OF my onstage demeanor, taken from a live review written some years ago, remains a career high for me. Granted, it doesn't exactly read, "Evoking the powerful stage presence of a latter-day John Entwistle," but a boy can dream. . . .

The cool-as-a-cucumber stage persona of "The Ox," especially juxtaposed with the hyperkinetic maneuvers of his Who bandmates, is key to Entwistle's legacy in the eyes of the uninitiated. At times, classic footage of the Who in concert is downright comical, with Entwistle standing stoically and staring off into space, looking as if he might stop at any point to let out an enormous yawn. Of course, tune into what the dude was doing on bass, and a different picture emerges: that of a ferocious beast tearing his prey—be it Precision, Thunderbird, Alembic, or Warwick—limb from bloody limb.

From his first recordings with the Who in 1964 through his death in 2002, there are hundreds of examples of Entwistle's muscular majesty on bass. But perhaps none are quite so accessible—and downright fun to play—as "The Real Me," the lead track from the band's 1973 masterpiece, *Quadrophenia*.

Up until shortly before the recording of *Quadrophenia*, Entwistle was a Fender man, relying mostly on his maple-fingerboard Precision basses to get the high-end snap that cut through the mix so well. But by 1973 he had shifted to playing darker sounding Gibson Thunderbirds. The deep, guttural growl of his T-Bird is evident from the first notes of Entwistle's opening salvo on "The Real Me," a series of upper-register fills that mostly fall within the C minor pentatonic scale. Here and throughout the song, Entwistle is all over the neck, literally playing at both extremes. Be sure to pay particular attention to the big slides at points like bars 9, 25, 27, 29, etc.

A huge part of Entwistle's massive sound comes from his right-hand attack. To best ape the Ox, pluck right at the end of your bass's fingerboard, and don't be timid—dig in!

INFO

LISTEN

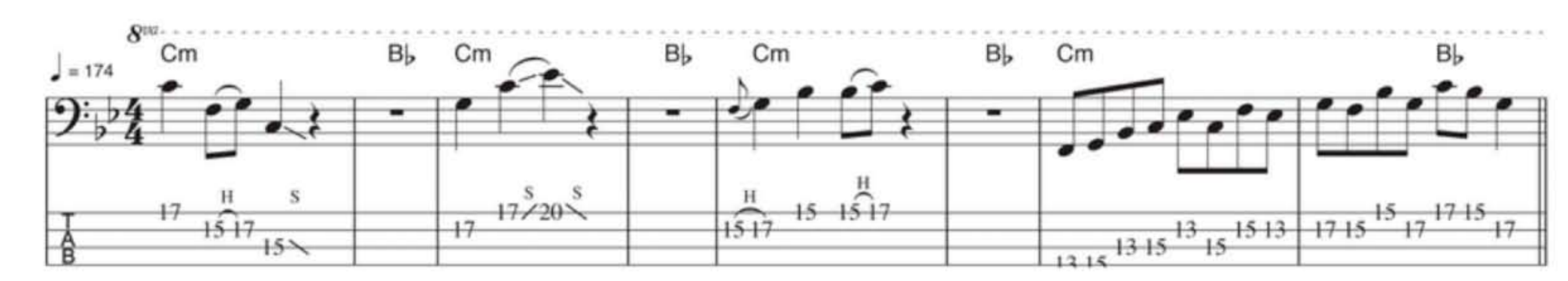
Listen
The Who, *Quadrophenia* [MCA, 1973]

EXPERIENCE

Starting in November and continuing through February, the Who is hitting the road to perform *Quadrophenia* in its entirety. Time to get those "air bass" chops up to snuff!

"The Real Me"

Transcription by Brian Fox



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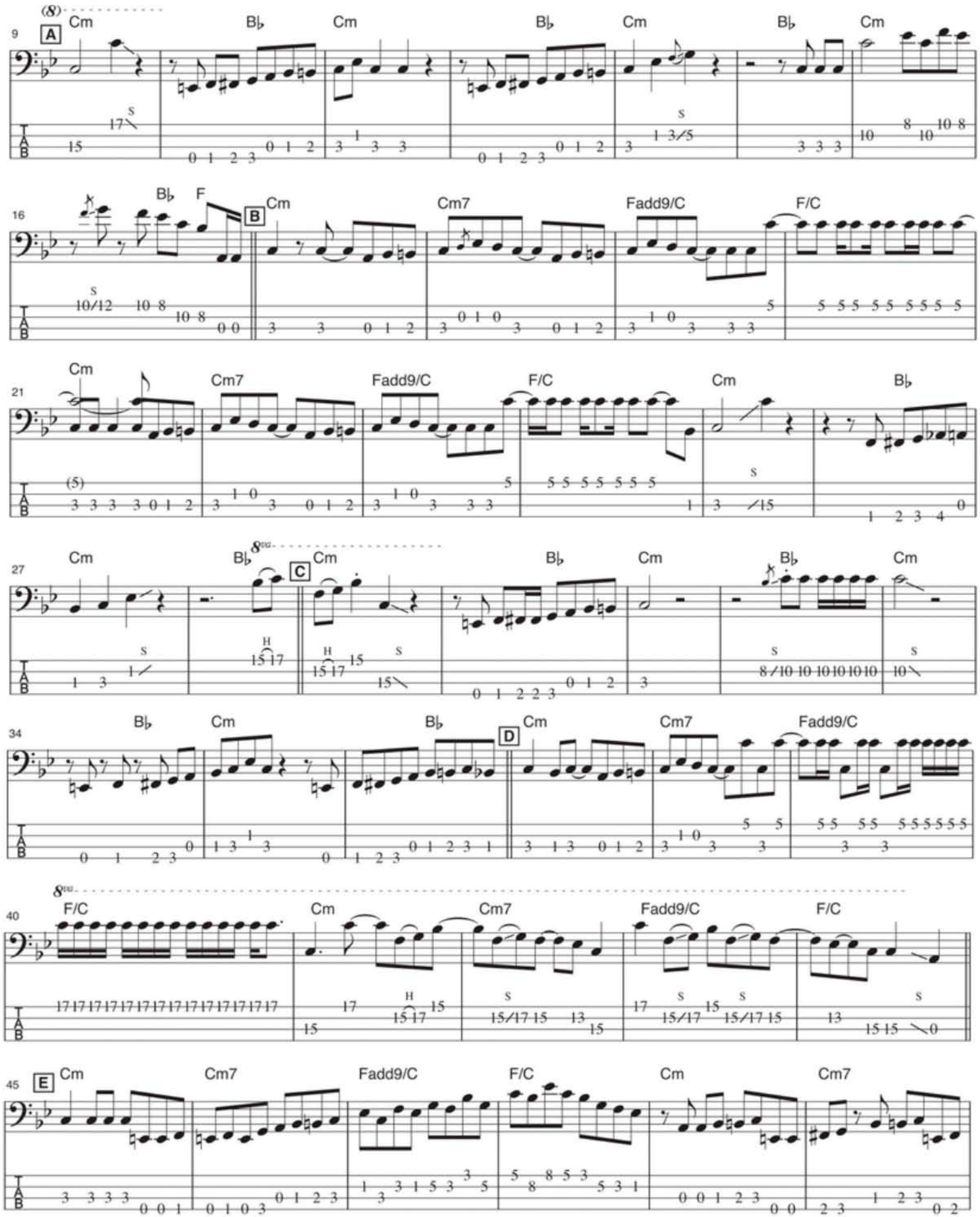
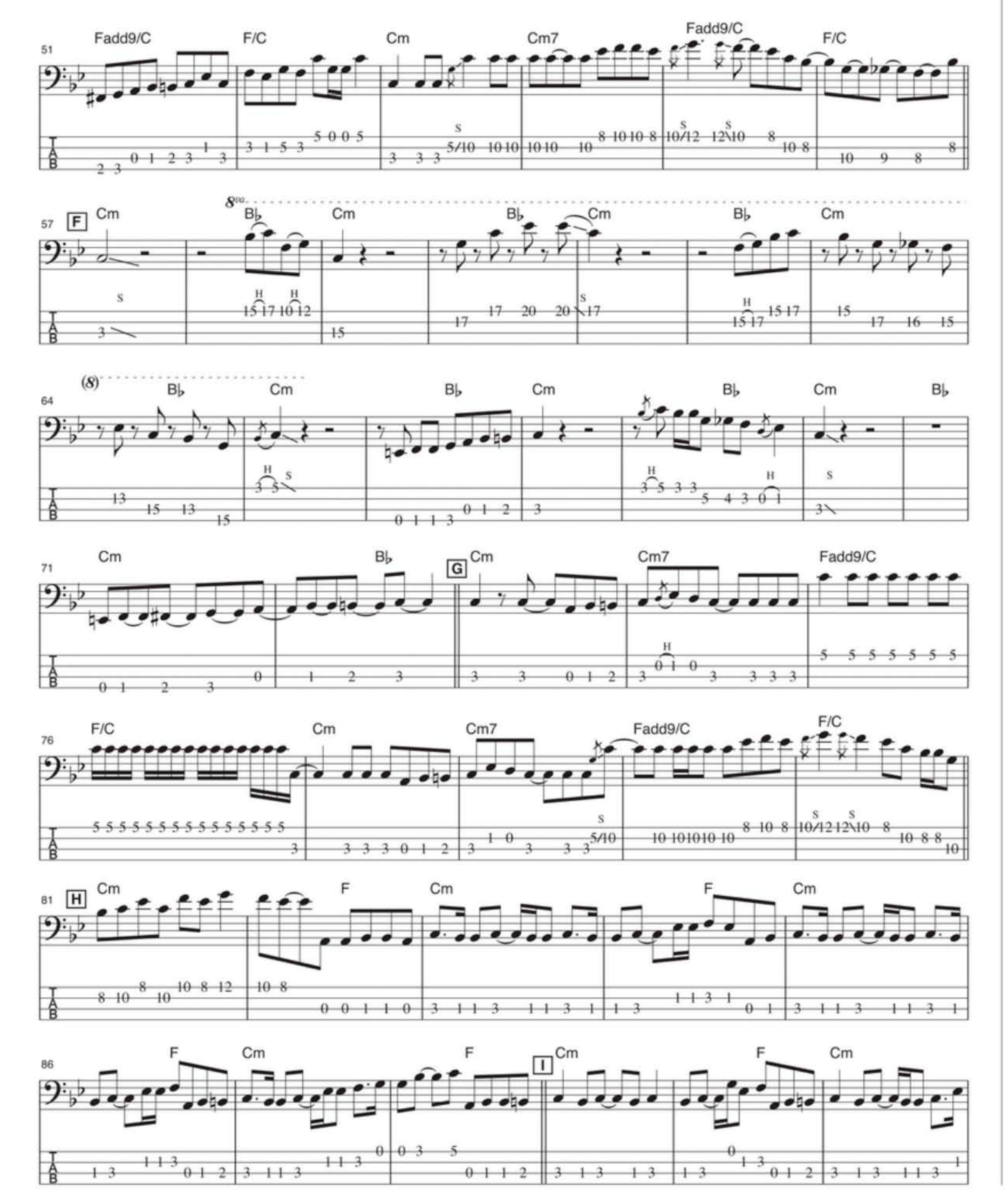

A
B
C
D
E
Cm
B♭
F
Cm7
Fadd9/C
F/C


51
Fadd9/C
F/C
Cm
Cm7
Fadd9/C
F/C
57
F
Cm
Bb
Cm
Bb
Cm
Bb
Cm
64
Bb
Cm
Bb
Cm
Bb
Cm
Bb
71
Cm
Bb
G
Cm
Cm7
Fadd9/C
76
F/C
Cm
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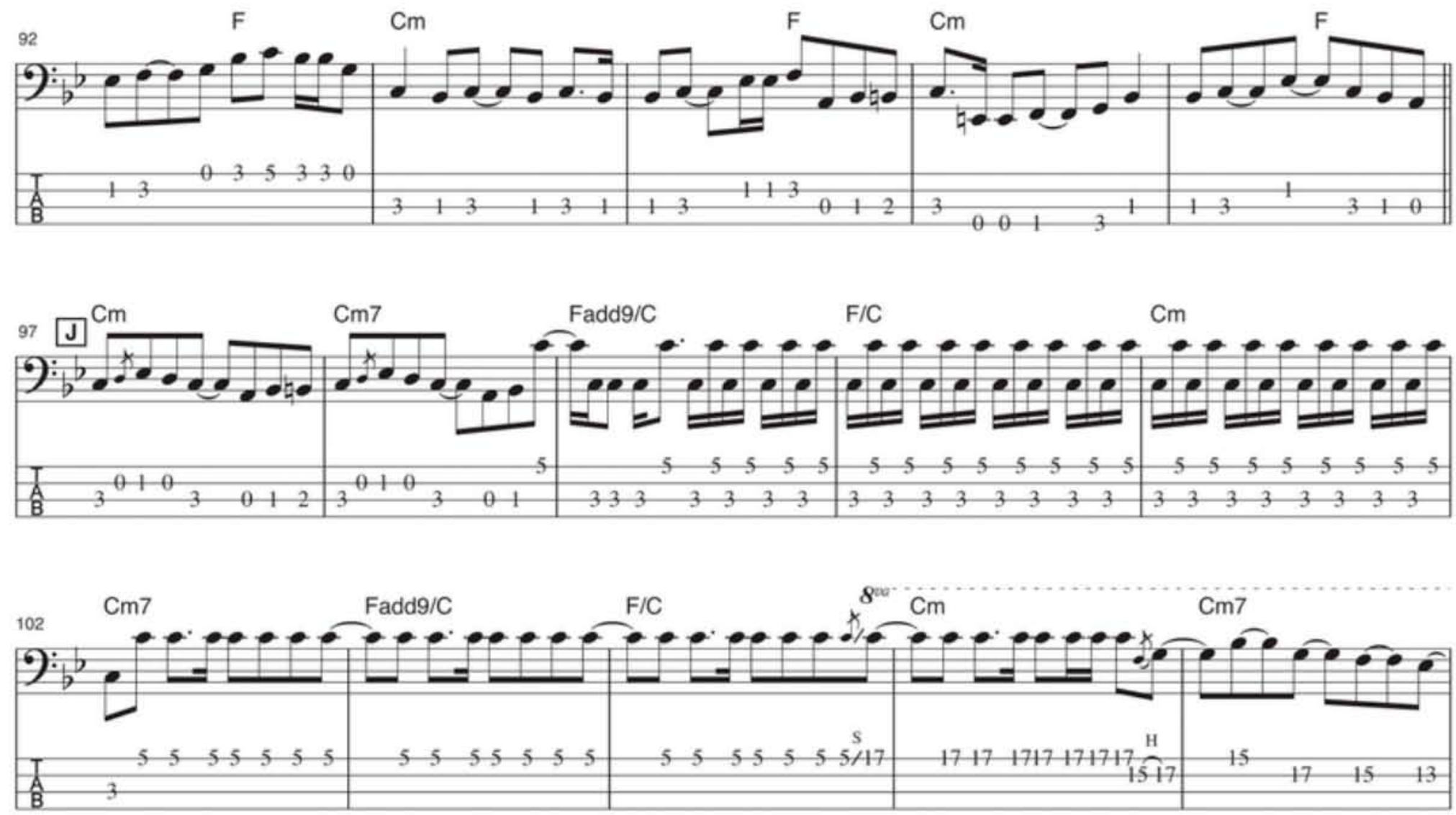

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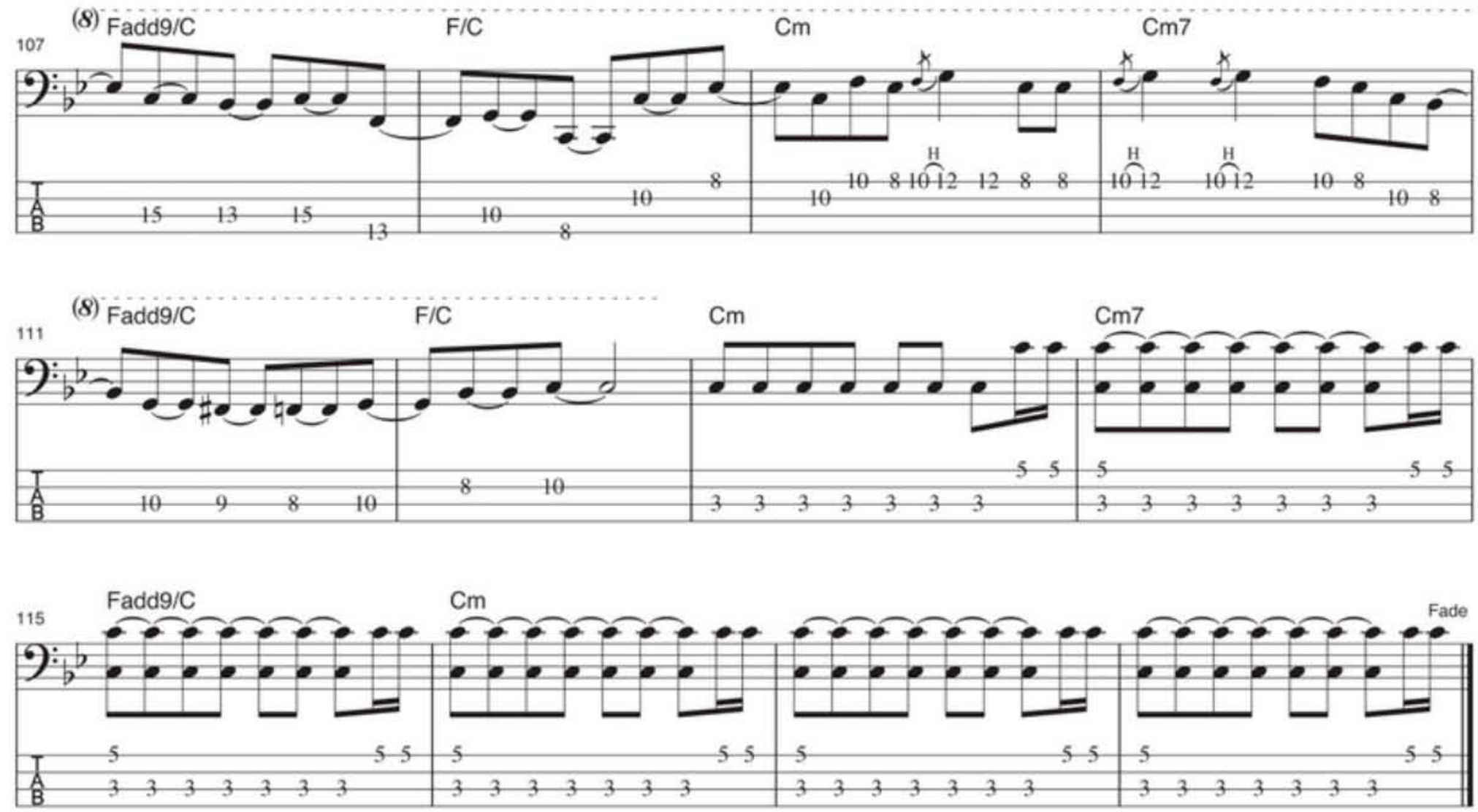
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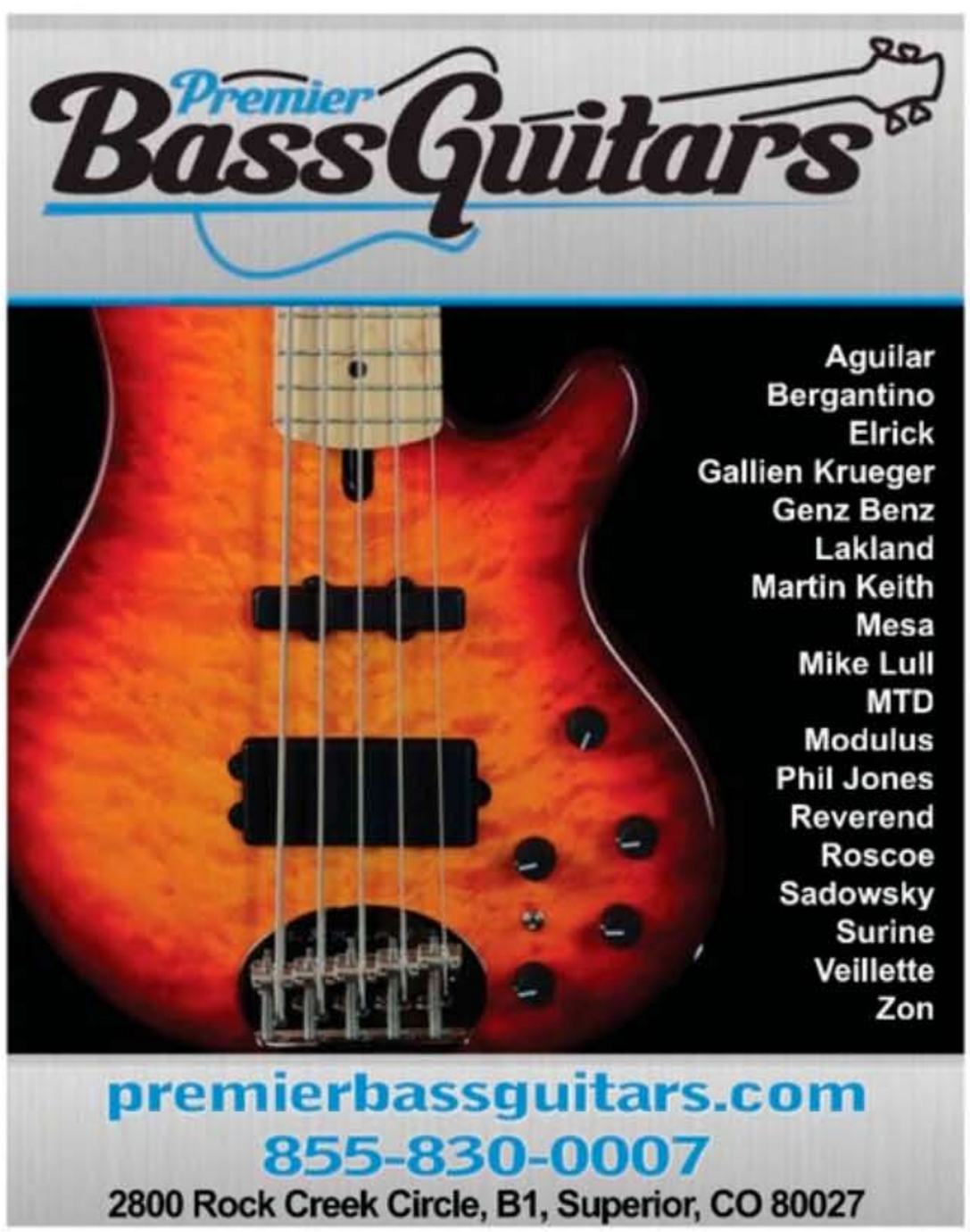
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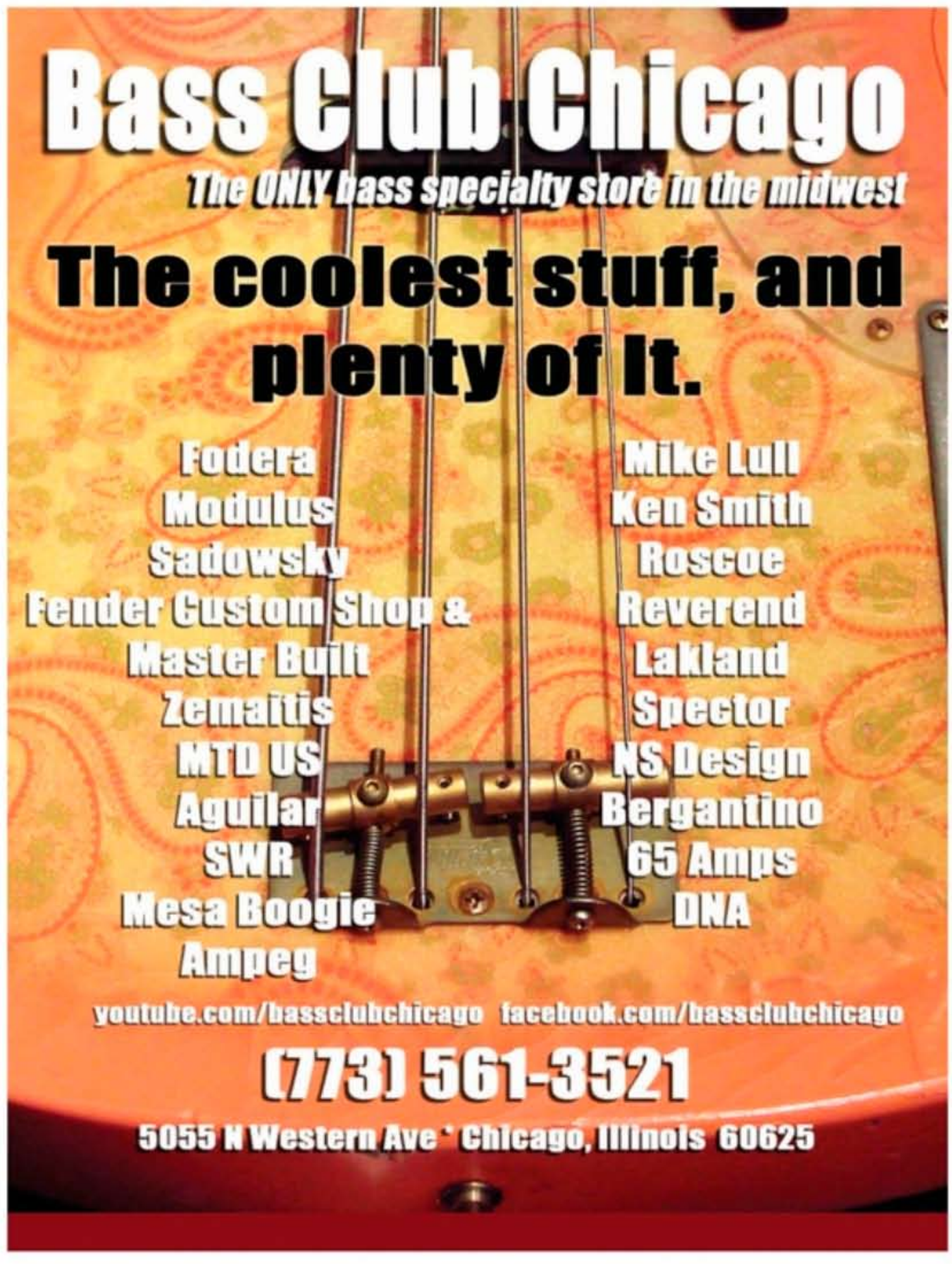

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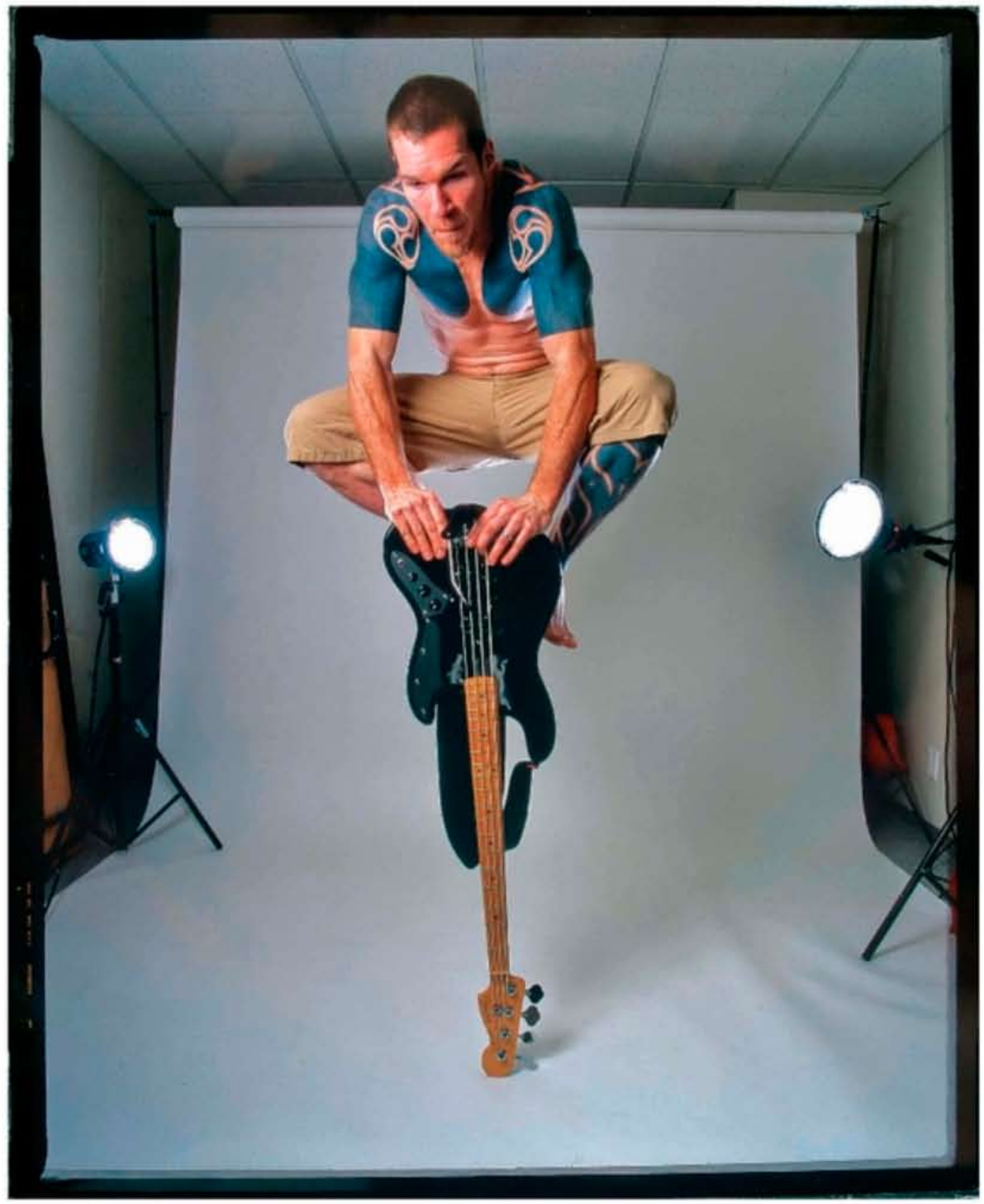
Over the past 20-plus years with Bass Player, *Art Director and photographer Paul Haggard has accumulated a shelf full of broken cameras and some dusty memories. He will recount some over the next few columns until either he can't remember any more or they fail to be interesting, whichever comes first.*



OUTTAKES

Photograph, from August 2003

I AM A 98-POUND WEAKLING. ACTUALLY I *WAS* A 98-POUND weakling, but as of late I have consumed much too much pizza and beer and so I am not only weak, but also pudgy and out of shape—well over 98 pounds. And so I am always envious of the muscular and fit, like Tim Commerford of such great and rebellious bands as Rage Against The Machine and Audioslave. Tim has a lean and hungry edge like he is always ready to leap at you to argue with a ferocious vehemence his position on freedom from oppression, or freedom from whatever. This persona, combined with powerful bass playing, made him a great choice for the August 2003 cover.

When Tim arrived at the offices around 1:00 PM for interview and photos, the spacious and glamourous photo studio (closet) had been prepped for full-length shooting. My intent was to capture as much of his imposing physique as possible. Tim got right to the point. "I'd rather not do this shoot, but management insists that I should, so I'm here."

Wow. Within one sentence he was already raging against my machine. This attitude is what a photographer seeks. At that moment I knew I was not going to have to work very hard to capture some of this marvelous disdain through the lens, and humbly, with all modesty aside, I was right. As the strobes popped, Tim came through with a series of powerful poses, gestures, grimaces, and glares. He flexed, and postured, and twisted, and then he jumped.

The first jump caught me off guard, and I missed. The following ones I caught, but he was up so high his head had cleared the top of the backdrop. No matter: We will simply retouch and extend the background up. Believe me, I am no Henri Cartier-Bresson; no Lee Friedlander; no Jim Marshall; no in-camera composition purist. If the image is flawed, I bust out Photoshop faster than a teenage girl can text OMG.

Afterward, as usual I acted cool and nonchalant until Tim had left and was out of sight, and then I leaped into my car and sped the film to the lab in a fit of spastic glee, impatiently waited the three hours it takes for the E6 process, and then repeated the action to go pick it up. Upon first examination, there preserved was a spectacular array of mighty images—a wealth of cover possibilities, the foremost of which were the jumps.

The next day Tim called and thanked me for the shoot. He is a good guy under his fierce exterior. "Oh, and don't use the jumping shots."

Wait. What?

"I'm not getting enough air. Don't run them."

Indeed this unneccessary vanity was most frustrating, as I generally will not use images vetoed by the subject, but in this case Tim was incorrect—he was just up too damned high. He cleared the backdrop in bare feet off the solid floor for Pete's sake, so we snuck in this one on page 57. —PAUL HAGGARD

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